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The Works

OF

Anthony Raphael Mengs

First Painter to his Catholic Majesty

CHARLES III.

Translated from the Italian

Published by the

Chev.r Don Joseph Nicholas D'Azara

Spanish Minister at Rome.

VOL I.

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PREFACE.

I SHOULD not attempt to write a preface to the following Tranſlation, were it not to apologize for ſo arduous an undertaking, which I am truly ſenſible required a man of great talents and no inferior erudition; but the love I have for the Author, both as a writer and an artiſt, made me hazard this feeble expoſition of his abilities, in hopes of being of ſervice to young ſtudents who cannot read his works in the languages of the original publications, and with the deſire of giving pleaſure to others who for mere amuſement may peruſe this Tranſlation, which certainly will contain matter truly intereſting either to the Literati, the Artiſt, or the Amateur.

Mengs, as an Author, is juſtly admired by all thoſe who have read his works in the languages in which they have been publiſhed, namely, in the Spaniſh and Italian, by the ſame Editor, the Chevalier Don Joſeph Nicholas D'Azara, Spaniſh Miniſter

at Rome. As an Artiſt, no unprejudiced perſon can ever have ſeen his beſt works without ſpeaking of him with the greateſt rapture and delight.

I have viſited the capital of Spain where the paintings of Mengs appear in all their greatneſs; and every one who has travelled through Spain muſt be ſenſible how high a fame he bears in that Country, where not to admire him (as an ingenious author has obſerved) is almoſt a violence againſt Church and State; an enthuſiaſim ſupported not by the wild rumor or folly of a day, but authoriſed by men of undoubted taſte and knowledge in the profeſsion. Almoſt every court in Europe has wiſhed to poſſeſs ſome paintings from his hand. Poland raiſed and ſupported him as long as it was able to ſupport itſelf; Rome acknowledges him as her greateſt ornament; Ruſsia, Naples, Florence courted him; and Spain looks on the ever-living monuments of his departed genius with all the ardour of religious adoration: from all theſe honors one muſt naturally be led to ſuppoſe he was not of the moſt common and ordinary rank of mankind.

The following works were originally written in various languages, and as the author could not be equally brilliant and correct in all, ſome parts will undoubtedly be found more excellent than others. The ſtyle and clearneſs of the ſentiments muſt

naturally have suffered, but however, the ideas and profundity of his knowledge in the arts will always appear the same.

His papers were found very confused, and although they were regulated by the Italian Editor with the desire of correctness, yet in reducing the whole to one language, and by apparent confusion in other respects, the sense has been left in some parts very obscure, and the style and phrases, in many places, have remained inelegant.

It has not been my view either to correct the style, or add to the elegance of this work, fearing that by produing a forced or affected improvement, I might have impaired the original ideas of the author, who never wrote any thing without well considering what he wrote, and whose genuine sentiments will be of much more value than all the affectation of a brilliant style, in which, notwithstanding, he will not be found deficient where his original language appears verbatim. I have neither the leisure or abilities to afford me a hope of producing a truly perfect and elegant translation, but an useful and just one is what I aim at, and in which I hope to be successful. I have endeavoured to render the sentiments of the author as plain and intelligible as I am able, and as he confesses to have written this work for Artists, (who are not all Literati) I hope I have pursued the most desirable end. Criticism

will therefore be done away, as my only views in the following tranſlation were thoſe of amuſement, and the deſire of making the author better known to the Engliſh; and at the ſame time I lament, that no one of ſuperior abilities has attempted it before me, to have done him all the juſtice he deſerves: however, I truſt the following tranſlation will be found to contain the original ideas of the author, and that it will convince every one of his abilities as a writer; and his famous piece in All-ſouls College Oxford will ever be a ſufficient ſpecimen to give an idea of him as an artiſt.*

THE TRANSLATOR.

* The ſubject of this picture is our Saviour in the garden: it conſists of two figures in the foreground, highly finiſhed, and beautifully painted. It was ordered by a gentleman of that College whilſt on his travels through Spain; but being limited to the price, he was obliged to chooſe a ſubject of few figures. This gentleman relates a ſingular anecdote of Mengs, which will further ſhow the profundity of his knowledge and diſcernment in things of antiquity. Whilſt an eſteemed Author, well known and valued in the Muſical World, was abroad collecting materials for his Hiſtory of Muſic, he found at Florence an ancient ſtatue of Apollo, with a bow and fiddle in his hand: this, he conſidered, would be ſufficient to decide the long conteſted point, whether or not the ancients had known the uſe of the bow. He conſulted many people to aſcertain the certainty if this ſtatue were really of antiquity; and at laſt Mengs was deſired to give his opinion, who, directly as he had examined it, without knowing the cauſe of the inquiry,

said "there was no doubt but that the statue was of antiquity, but that the arms and fiddle had been recently added" This had been done with such ingenuity that no one had discovered it before Mengs; but the truth of the same was not to be doubted. Mengs has done but few paintings for England except copies; one however he did for Lord Cooper, another for Sir R. C. Hoare, and a few more for others, of which I shall give an account; and there are a few beautiful portraits and pieces of his in France, which are not mentioned in the list of his Paintings.

PAINTINGS done for England by A. R. MENGS

The Holy Family, for Lord Cooper, done at Florence: 7 feet by 3.

Another Holy Family 7 feet by 5.

A Sibyl---- half figure, on canvass.

Octavian and Cleopatra, with many figures, on canvass; done for Sir R. C. Hoare.

A Magdalen half-figure.

Christ after the Resurrection, with the Magdalen on her knees; on wood; done for the University of Oxford:

A copy of the School of Athens, for the Duke of Northumberland.

Portrait of the late Arch-Bishop of Salisbury.

Andromeda and Perseus, intended for England, but was taken by a French Privateer, and at last was bought in France by Mons. de Sartine, minister of the marine.

A Sketch in clare obscure of the Resurrection, was intended for the great painting for Salisbury Cathedral, 30 palms in height. It was begun, but his death prevented its being finished.

ENGRAVINGS from his PAINTINGS.

St. John the Baptist, and

The Holy Mary Magdalen from the originals in possession of the King of Spain---engraved by Carmona.

Our Lord after the Resurrection, when he appears to the Magdalen; said to be engraved by the same.

The Madonna and Child, engraved by Volpato.

The Sibyl half-figure, mentioned above; engraved by Mosman.

Also from a design of his, Christ in the garden, done from Correggio, engraved by Volpato, which is in the collection of prints entitled SCHOLA ITALICA PICTURÆ.

All Souls altar-piece, by Sherwin.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS,

FIRST PAINTER AT THE CABINET OF CHARLES THE III. KING OF SPAIN.

THE major part of mankind pafs their days upon earth, without reflecting even on the blefsings and ease of which they partake, much lefs on the individual, to whofe genius, and labour they are indebted for many of their moft valuable enjoyments. This almoft general ingratitude arifes from ignorance, and idlenefs; it being congenial to our corrupt nature to feek fuch pleafures only as can be enjoyed without fatigue. Ours is notwithftanding the age in which, more than in any other, mankind have rifen from fuch inactivity, by conquering vice, and making virtue triumphant. This age will perhaps be diftinguifhed by pofterity as the age of inquietude. Arts, Sciences, Politics, the fortune of Nations, and of individuals, and laftly of domeftic life, all are in continual movement, and agitation. Such activity has neceffarily been able to produce an immenfe difplay of every kind of ufeful knowledge,

although allied to indolence, and diſtaſte, the birth of opulence. We have by much extended the ſuperfice of Science, by rendering it more eaſy, but in place of this we have loſt much of the original ardour and force. Patriotic zeal, and vehement love for the arts, not like their leaders, inflamed the minds of ſome of the antients; compared with which ours is a chimera, a folly, a ſtupidity: Ours is the cuſtom to attempt much, and to be profound in nothing; to be ſuperficially great, but cold and feeble in the execution. Yet in ſpite of ſuch general relaxation, we ſee, from time, to time, that nature produces ſome men nervous, ardent, and of a mind ſo organiſed as to be able to confront the univerſal corruption, and by force of ſtudy and incredible fatigue, riſe to illuſtrate their profeſſions with all the ancient and true ſplendor. The major part of their cotemporaries alone repay them with the ſtain of extravagance, others with envy; and the moſt who pique themſelves on bright and enlightened underſtanding, beſtow on them a cold and ſteril admiration.

Anthony Raphael Mengs appeared to the world to re-eſtabliſh the arts. If the tranſmigration could be admitted, one might ſay that ſome genius of Grece in its moſt florid ſtate, had transfuſed itſelf in him; Such was the profundity of his ideas, the elevation of his invention, and the ſimplicity and candour of his manners. A ſlave himſelf to the application of his profeſſion (which he enjoyed through life) he was an enemy to thoſe who were cold and unpaſsionate, and

much envied by them to whom his merits had rendered him offenſive.

The forefathers of Mengs were of Luſatia. His Grandfather was eſtabliſhed at Hamburgh, and from thence went to Copenhagen, where the Father of Mengs was born. This being his twentieth child, according to the account of his brothers, he knew not what name to give him, and on opening the Bible, the firſt name which preſented itſelf was Iſmael, which he made choice of. He had for Godfather a Painter of no ſuperior abilities, but this was a ſufficient motive for applying the boy's talents to painting. From this inferior ſchool Iſmael was ſoon removed to that of Mr. Cofre a Frenchman and the beſt painter at that court, and procuring ſome productions of Vandyke from a friend, he acquired by copying him the art of colouring; for which perfection he was remarkable during his life. His maſter had a niece of whom Iſmael became enamoured, but this affected lady not being able to ſuffer the ſmell of oil, the good Iſmael in obedience to her will, dedicated himſelf alone to miniature painting, and with ſuch application and ſucceſs, that in a ſhort time he arrived to great perfection in the art, and then was united to this beautiful, though capricious lady. On account of a contagious diſtemper, he ſoon after abandoned that country, and travelled to various courts of Germany, where he acquired the difficult art of painting in Enamel, for which he was ever after very famous.

From this alliance our Mengs was born, in the city of Auſig, in Bohemia, the 12th. of March 1728,

and to whom was given the names of Anthony, and Raphael, in memory of the two great Painters, Raphael d'Urbino, and Anthony Allegri da Correggio, of whom his father was a paſsionate admirer. Thus deſtined for a painter even from his cradle, nothing was ever given to him for his amuſement but implements of this nature, ſuch as pencils, paper, &c. and before he had attained his ſixth year he was placed to the ſtudy of drawing. The firſt rudiments which his father taught him, were the moſt ſimple ſtraight lines, as the vertical, the horizontal, and the oblique, which he practiſed till he was quite perfect, and from this he proceeded with the ſame care to the moſt ſimple geometrical figures, but always without rule and compaſs, in order to accuſtom his eye to exactneſs. After that he proceeded to delineate the contours of the different parts of the human body, and was obliged to reduce them as well as he was able to geometrical rule; from thence he arrived to join and arrange thoſe parts, and at laſt to give them their neceſſary grace and perfection. Then he proceeded to take ſketches, and according to the manuſcripts left by Iſmael, mentioning this particular, it was very difficult to conſtrain the vivacity of his ſon who was not willing to ſubject himſelf to a certain neatneſs and cleanlineſs, for which reaſon he obliged him to draw with Indian Ink, which took from him every poſsibility of continuing the ſame error.

In this ſtudy he continued for two years, after which he began to paint in oil. His father then ſeeing the great talent which he diſplayed,

ſought every means ſtrongly to impreſs in him the firſt principles of the art, and made him return again with the greateſt attention and prolixity to the ſtudy of drawing.

At the ſame time he taught him Chymiſtry, in which he was the moſt intelligent in Europe; and to paint in enamel, and miniature. This however did not interrupt his ſtudy of drawing, ſince not a day paſſed in which he did not delineate two intire figures of Raphael, or of Caracci, and not to loſe a moment of time he ſtudied likewiſe perſpective, and the moſt neceſſary parts of Anatomy. Although at Dreſden, where he was at that time, yet he did not think it neceſſary to ſtudy this Science upon dead bodies, but contented himſelf to learn it from books, and from the dry bones of ſkeletons.

After this ſtudy he began to draw antique figures by parts, the ſame ſize of the originals, which his father had brought from Rome; and by night copied by artificial light, models in miniature of the ſame ſtatues. By this method he put in practice that which he had learnt from perſpective, and anatomy, such as the degradation and diminution of the members, and the variation of form of the muſcles when in action. He ſtill improved himſelf in ſtudying the effect of light, of its degradation, upon ſhade, and of reflection, the which things he diſtinguiſhed better by artificial light, than by that of the ſun, and thus repeating the ſame operation in different places, he comprehended better the force of the

light and ſhade. In this manner he employed his time to the age of twelve years.

His father then ſeeing that he ſtudied with reflection, and that it was time to form in him a juſt taſte, which was not to be obtained out of Italy, he reſolved to conduct him to Rome, which he did in the year 1741. The young Mengs remained aſtoniſhed at ſight of ſuch beautiful objects which that capital afforded of the arts, and wiſhed to embrace the whole, but was reſtrained by his father, who made him ſtudy the moſt perfect although the moſt difficult, ſuch as the Laocoon, the Torſo of Belvidere, and the works of Michael Angelo in the Chapel Siſtina. After having made him ſtudy theſe in the different modes, he removed him to the chambers of Raphael to practice the moſt beautiful heads, and dreſſed figures, in order to learn the taſte of Drapery, for which Raphael is ſo excellent. Iſmael was at that time Painter to Auguſtus 3d. King of Poland, and being very deſirous to ſend him ſome eſſay of the abilities of his ſon, he made him copy in miniature, two pieces of Raphael, which were in the Novitiate, and in the Profeſsion Houſe, then belonging to the Jeſuits, and wiſhing at the ſame time to ſend to His Majeſty a painting in enamel, ſufficiently large of the ſame kind, he ordered his ſon to begin a drawing of his own invention, which the father executed to a certain point, and then left it to his ſon to give it the finiſhing hand. Never did a work of that kind receive more admiration, as Iſmael was the beſt painter in enamel

ever known even to this day, and his works have been ever conſidered as invaluable for his beautiful colouring, and practice in the Art. His only misfortune was not having had in his youth a better ſchool for painting, which he was ſenſible of, and for that reaſon he urged his ſon ſo much to the ſtudy of the firſt principles. Till now we behold Iſmael directing the ſtudies of his Son, and giving him that education which has contributed ſo much to his progreſs in the arts, and conduct through life; we ſhall then proceed to treat likewiſe of his character. A man more ſevere and rigid to his children never was known. He exacted from them the moſt indefatigable labour, without ever allowing the leaſt moment of recreation. They were at this time grown up and had never had any intercourſe with the world, or ſcarcely ſpoken with familiarity to any perſons except their family; ſo much ſo, that many people with whom Iſmael was in the habits of intimacy, were quite ignorant of his having a family. His paſsion for muſic only could ſoften him ſo as to admit to his houſe a certain gentleman of the name of Annibale, well known and juſtly eſteemed at the court, and who by a ſingular contrivance (as we ſhall ſee) made known to the King of Poland the merits of the young Mengs. When he went from home, he always left his children ſhut up in the houſe, and on his return ſtrictly examined if they had performed the taſk impoſed on them to execute during his abſence. His chaſtiſement was more like a ſevere maſter than a father. He was a perfect tyrant in his houſe. In Rome he

continued the ſame conduct. Having conducted our young Anthony to the Vatican, he would there order him what he was to accompliſh in that day, and with a flaſk of water, and a little bread would leave him embroiled with the fatiguing taſk he had to ſtudy. After which Iſmael would return to reconduct him to the houſe, where he made him render account of what he had done, and one might well ſuppoſe the examination was ſufficiently rigid. This ſort of ſtudy rendered him ſo reflective that he could form a hiſtory of all the thoughts of Raphael. To hear him deſcribe the beauties of the different paintings in the aforeſaid chamber, one would ſuppoſe it was Raphael himſelf who was giving the deſcription. From the ſtyle in which one part was painted he demonſtrated that from which the Author had founded his original idea; and from thence he diſcovered his firſt deſign. Then following that which was executed in another ſtyle, he pointed out the motives the painter neceſſarily muſt have had in making thoſe changes.

He marked the changes and corrections from which he drew thoſe reflections, and finiſhing to review the picture, one had the perfect hiſtory of what ideas occupied the mind of Raphael in the execution of that work. Mengs explained the whole with reaſons, and obſervations, ſo clear and evident, that the underſtanding was compelled to render him the credit of geometrical demonſtration.

This education ſo favourable for the arts, was

ſo diſadvantageous to the perſon of our young ſtudent, that it implanted in him, ſuch an habitual careleſſneſs for his appearance, that thoſe who knew him not would have taken him for a clown. A perfect ignorance of the world, rendered him almoſt deſtitute of common civility in his behaviour; a certain confined manner, which appeared a kind of diffidence, and laſtly a negligence of his own intereſts, were the cauſe of his own infelicity, and that of his family, whilſt he lived.

After three years thus ſpent in ſtudy at Rome he returned to Dreſden where he applied himſelf to painting in crayons, and there painted his own portrait in two different ſtyles of painting, and that of the aforeſaid Signor Annibale, by whoſe means he was made known to that Sovereign. His Majeſty being in doubt that a boy of his age could have arrived to ſuch perfection in the arts, ordered that in preſence of an Italian paintreſs, a diſciple of the celebrated Roſalba Cariera, he ſhould take the likeneſs of her huſband, which being done, the King remained ſurpriſed at ſuch ability, and immediately wiſhed him to paint his portrait, in which Mengs expreſſed the moſt perfect reſemblance of that nobleneſs which was the characteriſtic of this Prince, and for which he merited the greateſt eſteem.

In the year 1745, the King retired to Poland, on account of the war, and after the peace returning again to Dreſden, he deſired to have the Portraits of all the family of Mengs, and wiſhed for Anthony to take that of his father; and that

his eldeſt Siſter, who likewiſe painted very eminently ſhould take his. All were therefore placed in the cabinet of Crayons. Anthony was then choſen Cabinet Painter, with a penſion of Six Hundred TALLERI, and a place of habitation, without any other reſtraint or obligation, than to give the King the preference of thoſe works he might make choice of, for which he would pay ſuch price, as Anthony himſelf ſhould fix upon them. Anthony did not accept this good fortune without the permiſsion to return again to Rome, a pretention which afforded ſome ſcandal to the Count de Bruhl, the moſt powerful miniſter that King ever had. He however in place of being offended, approved the idea of the painter, and granted him licence with the greateſt good will.

He returned therefore to Rome with his Father, and his two Siſters, and took a houſe near the Vatican, in order to have the greateſt accommodation for purſuing his Ancient Studies. He drew from paintings and ſtatues; frequented the Accademies, and lectures on Anatomy in the Hoſpital of the Holy Ghoſt. He drew at the ſame time ſome miniatures at the requeſt of his father.

In this exercise he continued four years, after which time he dedicated himſelf to compoſition. From one piece of the Holy Family, he met with very great applauſe. The firſt perſonages of the city came to admire it, which rendered our Anthony very famous in Rome, and ſo much eſteemed, that he was requeſted by the firſt

people to ſettle there, offering to obtain permiſſion of his Sovereign, by aſsigning him a certain number of his works. This offer was gratefully received by Mengs, being thus able to purſue his ſtudies in preſence of ſuch marvellous production of the arts as are to be found at Rome; but his father prized greater the advantage of eſtabliſhing him in Saxony, which he accordingly did. However before parting Anthony married a young lady ſufficiently beautiful and reſpectable, called Margarita Guazzi, which he happened to meet when ſeeking a model for the head of the Madonna, referred to in the aforeſaid picture.

The family thus augmented left Rome at the end of the year 1749 and arrived at Dreſden at Chriſtmas. The ſevere cold of that climate in Winter, and various domeſtic diſturbances occaſioned a great melancholy in our Mengs. His father in continuation of his cruel deſpotiſm, ſeized on the whole property which was in the houſe of his Son, even to the laſt penny; after which he turned him out in the ſtreet, without either goods or money. Some friends, and particularly his good friend Annibale (who to the end of his days proved his faithful friend) aſsiſted him by their generoſity; but above all the King, and his Son the electorate Prince, conſoled him by aſsigning him a comfortable habitation and a carriage. He applied likewiſe for the title of firſt Painter to the King, which was granted to him very graciouſly in place of Mr. Silveſtre, who retired to Paris; and the King increaſed his penſion to one

thouſand Talleri without any obligation. From that time numerous were the priviledges, and honors, which that Sovereign and the Royal Family beſtowed upon Mengs; and to prove his goodneſs of heart, he never after would ſpeak of that court, but in expreſsions of the higheſt ſenſe of gratitude. The King Auguſtus having at that time built a church of tolerable ſize in the palace, which was conſecrated in the year 1751, wiſhed Mengs to paint a piece for the high altar and for the other two at the ſides. He executed the two laſt at Dreſden, but for that of the high altar, he aſked permiſsion to go to Rome to finiſh it there, as much from the motive of reeſtabliſhing his health, which was much impaired by this rigid climate, as for the perfection of this work, which he was better able to execute in that country ſo congenial to the arts. His Majeſty well underſtood the difference of the countries and being inſtructed in the hiſtory of Painters, knew what advantages were to be found in Italy for perfecting their works; therefore inſtantly granted him the licence he required.

In the ſpring of 1752, Mengs returned again to Rome with his wife, and a daughter born at Dreſden; the which is at preſent wife to Don. Manuel Carmona, a celebrated Engraver at Madrid. The climate of Rome ſoon reeſtabliſhed his health, and the ſatisfaction of finding himſelf again in the centre of the arts, furniſhed him with ſpirits equal to the taſk of the moſt arduous undertaking.

The firſt work which he finiſhed was a copy of

the great painting of Raphael, called the School of Athens, for Lord Northumberland. He accepted this commiſsion only to reflect on, and ſtudy as much as poſsible that invaluable painter. In fact he has ſince confeſſed that he then found how very imperfectly he had known Raphael before that time.

This copy being finiſhed, he began the painting for the Altar of Dreſden with the greateſt application and delight. In the mean time arrived the unfortunate intelligence, that the war between the Empreſs and the King of Pruſsia, occaſioned the invaſion of Saxony, and the flight of the King from his ſtates, which proved the interruption of the ſtipend allowed to Mengs. By this news reduced to the greateſt miſery, he was obliged to accept of the works offered him by different individuals, in order to maintain his family, which every year increaſed. He therefore thought of making himſelf better known to the public by means of ſome work, which he could exhibit in public, and for this reaſon embraced an opportunity which offered of painting a piece in freſco, which the fathers Celeſtini wiſhed for the cieling of the church of Saint Euſebius.

The father abbot del Guidice, deſiring, what his ſect could not find, which was, a painter whoſe demands were conformable to the little money he had to beſtow on him, preſented himſelf to Mengs, and made him the propoſition, telling him plainly at the ſame time the little he had to pay him, and THAT HE OUGHT WELL

TO CONSIDER WORKING FOR CHARITY, AS HE COULD ONLY MAKE UP THE EXPENCE OF THE CARPENTERS AND MASONS, AND GIVE HIM TWO HUNDRED SCUDI. In ſpite of theſe inadequate conditions, Mengs accepted the undertaking, in order to make himſelf known, and to exerciſe a kind of painting which no one in Rome at that time practiced; Corrado Giaquinto being then gone to Madrid. When the work was finiſhed it received univerſal applauſe, as it was at firſt held impoſsible to execute a freſco of that kind; and although the compoſition was not of the taſte of painters of the modern ſchools, yet, notwithſtanding, they were not able to cenſure it for any eſſential defects; and it was more eſteemed by them than the author himſelf could have expected.

When he departed from Dreſden, the King gave him orders to go to Naples to paint the portraits of all the Royal Family, forbidding him to take any recompence. This were well whilſt the pay of that court was continued, but being affrayed by the aforeſaid changes, and without hope that they would ſoon be accommodated, he was forced to think after another manner; ſo that the Duke de Ceriſano, miniſter from that court then at Rome, being deſirous of thoſe portraits, he gave him a note of the prices he was to have received for them in Saxony, proteſting beſides that he had a contrary order from his Sovereign. The anſwer he received was that the Queen had ſaid he was exorbitant in the price which he demanded for thoſe portraits, and that it was not neceſſary

he ſhould execute them. Thus we behold one of the many traits which the envy of the artiſts of the court have invented againſt Mengs; who from his own character, being honourable and ſincere, was incapable of judging the reverſe of others, therefore guarded not againſt their machinations. The ſequel of which was, that the King of Naples having commiſsioned him to execute a painting for the Chapel of Caſerta, and having advanced him three hundred Zecchini, the half of its price, he received a letter from his Majeſty's firſt Architect, in the which he informed him, that he might take his leiſure in finiſhing that painting, for that it would not be required for many years. A ſhort time after, the Count de Lagnaſco, Miniſter of Poland at Rome, went to Naples, and aſſured Mengs, that the Queen was very much ſurpriſed at him, that after ſhe had granted him all that he had demanded he had not finiſhed the portraits; and that not having in conſequence wiſhed to receive the other paintings for the Chapel of Caſerta, ſhe had employed other painters. This was ſufficient to teach Mengs, the ſecrets of the rage of emulation, and how eaſy it was to abuſe authority the moſt reſpectable.

In order to oppoſe the effect of this calumny Mengs finiſhed this painting with haſte, and preſented it to the King, at the time when he was departing for Spain to take poſſeſsion of that Kingdom on account of the death of his brother Ferdinand the ſixth. His Majeſty was pleaſed with it in the higheſt degree, and commiſsioned him

to take the portrait of his Son, whom he left King of Naples. Notwithſtanding to accompliſh which, he encountered many difficulties, occaſioned by thoſe who preſided at the Court, and who gave him to underſtand, that he would do well to depart from that Capital.

Returning to Rome, he undertook to paint the cieling of the gallery of the Villa of Cardinal Alexander Albani, in which he repreſented Apollo with the Goddeſs of Memory and the Muſes their offspring. In this work, he availed himſelf much of that which he had obſerved in the paintings of Herculaneum, to be ſeen in the Portico Muſeum: he attached a piece in continuation to this painting, to avoid the great error in works of this kind, which is, to terminate of itſelf as is the modern cuſtom; for by this method he avoided the diſagreeable breakings off or curtailing, which always deſtroy the beauty of the figures. Nevertheleſs, not to controvert entirely that mode, he painted the two pieces laterally, where entered only one figure to each, terminating according to the modern taſte.

He painted at the ſame time various pieces in oil for different perſons. One was, Cleopatra ſupplicating at the feet of Cæſar. Another was, A Madonna and Child, with Saint John and Saint Joſeph; likewiſe three half figures for England; and a Magdalen whole figure for the Prince of San Gervaſio at Naples.

At this time arrived at Rome a Mr. Webb, a young Engliſh Gentleman on his travels; who not having any further knowledge of the Arts,

than a little which he had acquired by ſtudying the Greek and Latin Authors at College, from whence he had recently departed, and being very deſirous to diſtinguiſh himſelf, he procured an introduction to Mengs, who, diſcovering in him a great love for antiquity, ſoon became ſo attached to him, that he treated him with the ſame attention as if he had been his Son, and communicated to him all he knew of his art; and gave him a Copy of his Treatiſe upon BEAUTY, and of his reflections upon the three great Painters. On returning to his country, Webb immediately publiſhed his treatiſe upon painting; which is nothing more than the entire ſyſtem of Mengs, ornamented with ſome paſſages of Pauſanias and Pliny; and this without even mentioning the ſource from which he had derived his knowledge; and in order the more to hide his plagiariſm, he advanced, that at that time there was not one Painter of ſufficient merit, or any perſon who could have noticed the ideas to which he gave light.

Mengs ſmiled when Mr. Marron, myſelf, and others, informed him of this extravagant production:

WEBB'S INQUIRY INTO THE BEAUTIES OF PAINTING.

Winkelman writing to Mr. Uſteri in the year 1761, expreſſes himſelf in the following terms of that Author.

" Je ſuis charmé que ma memoire ſoit meil-
" leure que la votre au ſujet de l'ouvrage An-
" glois. Je vous ai marqué dans le temps, que

" ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans ce livre eſt tiré " d'un manuſcrit ſur la Peinture que Mengs " communiqua à l'Auteur, que j'ai beaucoup " connu. Cependant le Fat oſe avancer qu'il " n'y a point de Peintre que ſoit en état de " faire par lui même les obſervations qu'il don- " ne tandis que c'eſt de Mengs qu'il a em- " prunté ces obſervations."

" I am happy that my memory is better " than yours, with regard to that Engliſh pub- " lication. I have remarked to you, that the " beſt parts of that book, are drawn from a ma- " nuſcript, which Mengs communicated to the " Author, and with whom I have been well ac- " quainted. Notwithſtanding, the Fop dares " to advance, that there is no Painter who " has abilities ſufficient of himſelf to make the " obſervations which he gives: at the ſame " time, it is from Mengs that he has derived all " theſe obſervations."

At this time, Mengs thought to be able to fix himſelf in Rome; when Charles 3d. who by accident had penetrated into his merit at Naples, invited him by means of Don Manuel de Roda, then his Miniſter at Rome, to come to Spain, and be in his ſervice; offering him a ſalary of two thouſand Doblones, a Houſe, Carriage, and all the expences attending his profeſsion; and in caſe he would accept it, he offered him likewiſe the accommodation of a Ship of war then at Naples, which was about to return to Spain. Mengs therefore embarked with his

family, and happily arrived at Alicant, the 7th day of October 1761.

Having reached the Court, the King received him with ſuch kindneſs as aſtoniſhed him; and the ſame attention he ever after continued, notwithſtanding all the trammels and arts of envy which were practiſed againſt him.

When he arrived at Madrid, the King had in his ſervice Corrado Giaquinto, the beſt painter in fresco at the School of Naples; and Giambatiſta Tiepolo, the beſt at Venice.

In ſpite of theſe obſtacles, Mengs produced his firſt work, and notwithſtanding he did not reſemble the others, all the nation proclaimed him a great Painter, which he certainly was. But the ſame emulation had enjoyed ſimilar applauſe, empowered with more ſecurity, and this was the cauſe of preparing more evils for Mengs. The number of his works done in freſco and in oil in Spain are incredible for the time, and the poor ſtate of health which he enjoyed. I ſhall give notwithſtanding in continuation to theſe memoirs, an account of the whole, contenting myſelf for the preſent, to cite the principal ones, in purſuing the narrative of his life.

He began, by painting the cieling of the King's Chamber, in which he repreſented an aſſemblage of the Gods, and diſplayed in it the moſt ſublime expreſsion and pureſt harmony. His colours were the moſt ſoft and lively, in which no other Painter has ever equalled him. The ignorant at the ſame time that they remained enchanted with the picture, called it cold and inanimate in

its compoſition, becauſe they were accuſtomed to judge of glaring pieces, and to employ little or no reaſon to enforce their contempt or admiration. That repoſe in the figures, and that character of divinity which hides all imperfections; and human neceſsity, could not move them to take from the legerity of Giordano, and the unconnectedneſs of Corrado.

In the apartment of the Dowager Queen, at preſent occupied by the Infanta Donna Joſepha, he painted Aurora in the ſame ſtyle of Beauty; and it appeared, that the Graces, in reward for having been painted by him ſo delicately in the firſt ceiling guided his hand to repreſent the Wife of Titon. In the four façides he painted the Four Seaſons of the Year, in ſuch beautiful and juſt alluſions, that the imagination muſt be immediately ſtricken with them.

In the apartment of the Princeſs, he finiſhed four paintings of the four parts of the day, Morning, Noon, Evening and Night, and with the ſame effect of beauty and grace which characterized his other works. All returned to that chamber deſtined for the Princeſs, who was the joy and delight of the Nation. For the Altar of the private Oratorio of his Majeſty, he painted in Freſco, the Holy Family, in the ſhort ſpace of eight days, and by this painting, plainly evinced to what perfection he had arrived in his profeſſion, ſince he knew how to unite the quickneſs and expedition of Giordano, with the beauty and correctneſs of Raphael,

At that time he had already painted various pieces in Oil for the King and Royal Family; and his Majeſty, whoſe fine taſte for the Arts never decreaſed, made him finiſh the whole apartment where he ſlept, even over the doors of the chamber. I ſhall juſt ſpeak of the diſpoſitions of theſe works, as the moſt ſingular ever known. Every Painter is diſtinguiſhed by ſome particularity, which ſtamps the characteriſtic of his works; Apelles for his grace, Ariſtides and Raphael for expreſsion, Correggio for light and ſhade, Titian for colouring, &c. But to poſſeſs all theſe talents, and to produce equal beauty in every ſtyle, and to conduct the whole with the ſame philoſophy, was reſerved alone for Mengs.

Whoever views his excellent paintings, will never believe that the ſame hand painted the whole. The generality of his works inſpire a tender melancholy, and ſympathetic ſadneſs. His ordinary mode of colouring, reſembles the Doric ſtyle in Muſic and in Architecture; and every figure ſhows the degree of colouring which correſponds with its character. In his dead Chriſt, one beholds a corpſe after infinite ſufferings, but ſtill one diſtinguiſhes a perfect body, in its beauty divine. He does not diſfigure it with tears and with blood, as other painters of fame have done, and who have employed all their ſtudy to paint a form the moſt frightful and horrible. Theſe are an ignorant people, who labour for the material ſenſes of others, fully ignorant as themſelves. Mengs was a Phi-

loſopher and painted for Philoſophers. The Virgin on foot, with her eyes directed to Heaven appeared to offer to her Maker a ſacrifice of the deepeſt contrition that human nature could ſuffer. That extatic poſture, immoveable, the raiſed and falling hand, the muſcles of the face convulſed, and laſtly, her blue mantle, and livid veſt, correſponding with her pallid face, form an expreſsion which one cannot behold without the moſt intereſted attention.

In his Magdalen, ſorrow is painted the moſt natural to human nature; at the time when ſhe is intirely occupied in the care of the deceaſed, a torrent of tears ſtream from her beautiful eyes to indicate the tenderneſs of her heart.

Saint John with the muſcles of his face ſwelled, and his eyes impregnated with blood inſtead of tears, expreſſes the intenſe ſufferings which a robuſt youth is capable of ſupporting, without burſting out into complaints or any violent agitations. A ſervant carrying a vaſe of aromatics to the Sepulchre, ſtops to contemplate that ſpectacle, and juſtly expreſſes that natural ſtupidity, which he mechanically and diſintereſtedly felt. The other figures expreſs the pain which ought to be mechanically proved: and that part which deſcribes the country and place of paſsion, is only marked, not to divert the ſight from the principal action; but the whole juſtly expreſs the horror of the ſcene, in which has ſuffered the Sovereign of the Univerſe. This painting ought to be called the painting of philoſophy, and with more truth than of the paint-

ing of the Ruin of Troy, in the time of the Carthaginian Juno, one might say SUNT LACRIME RERUM, ET MENTEM MORTALIA TANGUNT.

At the same time that Mengs was occupied in adorning the Palace of his Sovereign, he sought also to render himself useful, by establishing a School of the Arts in Spain, and proposed to the Academy of which he was a Member, various regulations according to his sublime ideas, which were at first accepted; but ignorance and passion so predominated, that they were not afterwards put in practice, or followed; instead of which, they retorted with disgust on the whole of his projects, and even threatened his reputation. We shall therefore draw a veil over this scene of human frailty, and hide it in forgetfulness for the honor of humanity.

Affliction of mind, (the privation of every delight in life) and disordinate application to his profession compleatly impaired his health.

At the dawn of day he began his labour, and without interruption, except to dine, he continued till night; then taking very little food he shut himself up in his house, at some other work, either in drawing, or preparing materials for the following day. He had sent his family to Rome, and was by this deprived of the greatest comfort and delight he could enjoy. This increased his infirmity; he lost his appetite and fell into a decline, when every one expected his death as near approaching. In this state the King granted him licence to return to Rome, but not being able to support so fatiguing a

journey, he was obliged to reſt at Monaco, where the abilities of a Phyſician and the goodneſs of the air recruited his ſtrength ſufficient to proceed.

Being arrived, he ſoon recovered his ſpirits, and became ſufficiently reeſtabliſhed in his health. Here he finiſhed a painting of Chriſt, and a Magdalen in the ſituation of NOLI ME TANGERE. After which he undertook for the King, another piece much larger, of the Nativity. In this he had in view to combat with Coreggio in his famous Night: poſterity will judge if he ſucceeded. As the painting of the Depoſition expreſſed all the ſcene of ſublime grief; this to the contrary, portrayed the moſt brilliant beauty that the ſenſes of reaſon could enjoy.

In this we behold no other light than that which beams from the Son of God; and this is illuminated, in ſuch a manner that it appears as if the ſight could penetrate within the figures. Their fleſh appears ſo natural and perfect, that if Titian himſelf had wiſhed to have produced an equal painting, he would not certainly have choſen his figures with that propriety which Mengs has done. The Virgin, is not a beautiful Villager, like that which Raphael has made choice of in a ſimilar caſe, who never exalted his character above the moſt beautiful that are to be found in nature. Mengs knew how to figure an heroical beauty, between the divine and human. Among the Shepherds in this picture is likewiſe his portrait.

He finiſhed purpoſely for the King two ſmall paintings, St. John, and a Magdalen, which have been engraven by his ſon in law Carmona.

At that time Pope Clement 14th propoſed to him to paint ſome things for the Vatican. This was ever his moſt anxious deſire, to leave ſomething in memory of himſelf in that great emporium of the Arts; he therefore quickly accepted the propoſal, but with injunction that nothing ſhould be ſpoken to him of recompence.

He undertook therefore the painting of the Cabinet of the Muſeum, which was deſigned in the Vatican to keep the fragments of Ancient PAPIRI.

In this painting, in the centre of the ceiling, he repreſented the ſame Muſeum, and in it Hiſtory, who writes her memoirs on offended Time. Janus is on one ſide, and a Genius is on the other in the act of carrying to the Muſeum ſome rolls of parchment. Fame flying, announces to the world that Muſeum, and without being ſo horrible as the ſiſter of Enceladus, one knows nevertheleſs to be PEDIBUS CELEREM, ET PERNICIBUS ALIS. The compoſition and colouring, which was the moſt brilliant and ſweet that could be in oil, the enchantment of light and ſhade, the expreſsion, and certain harmony and repoſe which attracted and fixed the ſight, rendered this painting, without any exaggeration, the firſt freſco in the world.

Over the door were Moſes and St. Peter ſeated in a Niche, accompanied by the Genii. In the phyſiognomy of the firſt, one beholds the confi-

dent authority of the Legiſlator of God, and in the ſecond, Faith, who examines not. He painted the laſt in diſtemper not to damage with the cement of the freſco, the gilding which was made for the ornaments.

The four Genii in the niche are of an ideal beauty ſo ſublime, that one never tires to view and admire them. The ornaments likewiſe of this ſuperb Cabinet, are of his deſigns, and directed by him; and allude to the Egyptian arts: Papiri being the manufacture of that country. Marble, Bronze, and Architecture have all the ſame alluſion: the floor only is that which was not deſigned by Mengs.

He had been near three years in Italy before he had finiſhed this work, and was perfectly reeſtabliſhed in his health; in conſequence he had no reaſon for remaining ſo long without giving an account to the King, who nevertheleſs continued him his ſtipend the ſame as if he had remained at Madrid. He had beſides undertaken this work of the Papiri without leave and even without his knowledge. Any other ſovereign but Charles 3d. would have reſented this abuſe of his bounty; but his unwearied patience contented itſelf to make me ſearch reſervedly the motives which detained Mengs at Rome: I repreſented to his Majeſty the truth, excuſing Mengs on account of his paſsion for Rome, the centre of the polite arts; likewiſe for the tenderneſs he bore his family, from whom he had not the courage to ſeparate himſelf; and for his ambition (ſo excuſeable in an artiſt of

his merit) to leave ſome teſtimony in memory of his abilities, with thoſe of Raphael; and laſtly relieved his delicacy, by ſaying he had ſought nothing from any other ſovereign ſince he ſerved the King of Spain, promiſing at the ſame time what I would do in order to induce him ſoon to depart for Madrid.

At the indirect inſinuation I gave him he was uneaſy and reſolved precipitately to leave incomplete the work of the Papiri, and to depart immediately. No reflection was capable of diverting him from this reſolution. He went firſt to Naples to take the portraits of thoſe Sovereigns according as he had promiſed the King their father; but inſtead of finiſhing them both according as he had determined before he left Rome, he entertained himſelf in Naples all the winter, and returned to Rome with only the heads finiſhed; and being arrived he could not reſiſt the deſire of compleating what remained to be done in the Chamber of the Papiri; and it was then that he finiſhed the painting of the aforeſaid Saint Peter.

At laſt he left Rome to return to Spain with part of his family, leaving his five daughters in a Convent, recommended to his Brother in law, the celebrated Painter Signor Marron. Four months after paſsing through Florence to go to Parma, I found him at that place not having the reſolution to proceed any further, and on my return two months after, he was ſtill remaining there. During my ſhort ſtay at Florence, he drew my portrait, and his friendſhip

for me made him perform wonders in the execution. I returned to Rome, and five months after paſsing again by way of Florence, I induced him finally to depart for Spain. He left in that city two paintings, one for the Grand Duke and the other for the Grand Dutcheſs. The firſt repreſented the Virgin and Child, and Saint John, with two Angels at their ſide, all in little more than half figures; the beauty of which images enchanted every one intelligent in the art, as well as thoſe who were not artiſts. All is fancy: Nature could not have offered objects ſo beautiful. The other painting is Saint Joſeph awaking, and it is impoſsible to expreſs better the effect of ſleep; at the ſame time, one beholds a man in all the agitation of diſturbed reſt. Before parting from Florence, he finiſhed the portrait of the Cardinal Zelada, which he had begun in Rome, and likewiſe another little work.

In this year which Mengs remained in Italy, he ſtudied, or more properly ſpeaking, meliorated much his ſtyle. His former works bear no compariſon with thoſe he did after that period. The moſt ſerious ſtudy of the ancients, and eſpecially the paintings of Herculaneum manifeſted to him the true fountain of Beauty, and the way by which the Grecians had attained it. In his firſt works, notwithſtanding his corrections, his coloring and his harmony, one diſcovers at the ſame time ſtudy and labour; in his laſt works, all his facility and grace, and appear the effect of the hidden and inſenſible force of

nature. His Clare Obſcure has more vigor, and the effect of reflective light, and his perſpective ſky, bear an alluſion which one does not find in any other Painter.

In that ſtyle he painted at Madrid the grand Saloon where the King dines; and this work alone is ſufficient to eſtabliſh him the reputation of one of the firſt Painters. Upon the dining table of his Majeſty, he painted the Apotheoſis of Trajan, a Spaniſh Prince, and the beſt that ever occupied the Throne of the Cæſars, and the model of that Trajan who now reigns in Spain.

In front is the temple of Glory, to which all the Virtues lead, who unite in the compoſition: but this painting, and all the others which Mengs left in Spain, I ſhall mention in the account which I ſhall give of them apart.

In the private theatre of the Princes at Aranjuez he painted the ceiling, in the middle of which Time irritated ſeizes on Pleaſure, from whoſe head drops a garland of flowers. This fancy is one of the moſt graceful ever produced by Mengs. In the expreſsion one beholds the abuſe of Time, and the precept to profit oneſelf of it. The reſt of the ceiling is filled up by CARIATIDES, in clare obſcure, which will ever be a monument and ſchool of deſign of that great man.

It ſeems impoſsible that in little more than two years from the time Mengs was returned to Madrid, he could have painted ſo many things. This ſurpriſe however ceaſes, when we conſider the application and inceſſant

labour of that man, whoſe whole pleaſure during life, was painting and ſtudy; from which attention nothing could ever divert his mind.

But this fatigue injured his health, and moved the King to condeſcend to his deſire of once more returning to Rome, the centre of his delight. His Majeſty treated him with that generoſity which is peculiar to him; leaving him at full liberty with the pay of three thouſand Scudi, and one thouſand more to divide in dowers among his Daughters.

We again behold Mengs in Rome ſurrounded by his family, and with a reputation eſtabliſhed throughout the world, and with a fortune ſufficient to relieve him from the neceſsity of ſearching a ſubſiſtence by his labours. It appears then, that he ought to have been the moſt happy and tranquil man in the univerſe: he was notwithſtanding entirely the contrary. In a ſhort time he loſt his Wife, whom he adored, as an example of virtue and affection. From that time he became entirely changed both in manner and in diſpoſition, being one continual ſcourge to himſelf and thoſe around him. His former complaints relapſed and increaſed. The impreſſion of the cold, which in the nights of that winter was exceſsive, made him give into the other extreme, by living and painting in rooms ſhut up from every circulation of air, and heated by ſtoves and immenſe fires. This exceſsive heat, rariſied, and dried the air more than was proper for natural perſpiration. His lungs therefore loſt their elaſti-

city, and received the prejudicial emanation of an infinity of mineral tinctures united with the ambient heat.

I have many times been deprived of his company from not being able to raiſe my head in the peſtilential atmoſphere of his apartment. When he painted in freſco it was even worſe, becauſe he put his ſcaffold in a poſture forced againſt the ceiling, by which he reſpired the arid poiſons of the cement and the minerals which they uſe in that kind of painting. His lymph or fluids thickened in ſuch a manner, as no longer to nouriſh his blood. His muſcles and veins loſt their elaſticity; he almoſt entirely loſt his voice; a dry cough tormented him, and his appearance was quite that of a lifeleſs corpſe. The Phyſicians not knowing what other term to give his complaint pronounced him phthiſical.

Notwithſtanding the deplorable ſtate of his health, his weakneſs did not interrupt a day of his labours. He finiſhed a painting of Andromeda and Perſeus, began ſome years before, in which he expreſſed the true heroic Grecian character; a character whoſe beauty was not to be enjoyed by the vulgar and ignorant.

This work deſtined for England, was taken by a French veſſel, and it is not known to this day what became of it after.

At the laſt moments of his life, he finiſhed a pencil drawing, of the Depoſition, in a different manner from that which is in the King's chamber, and in ſpite of the repetition of the ſame ſubject, he knew how to vary the

compoſition and expreſsion in ſuch a manner, as can hardly be expreſſed. The greateſt Philoſophers ſince the days of Socrates, have not expreſſed the emotions of the mind with that propriety and ardour, nor ſo juſtly as Mengs has portrayed them in the compaſs of this ſingle painting of two colours only. Even at the time I am now writing the deſcription, all Rome is admiring that prodigy of the Art, and the Marquis Rinuccini of Florence, has offered one thouſand Scudi for that drawing and has obtained it.

Before Mengs departed the laſt time for Spain, he had a commiſsion to furniſh a painting for the baſilick of St. Peter, in the place in which is the fall of Simon Magus by Vanni.

The enterpriſe was dangerous, from the diſgrace another Painter met with who is yet living, and who ſaw his work rejected from thence. Being returned to Rome Mengs thought of undertaking this painting, notwithſtanding the impertinent petulance of the perſon charged with the affairs of that Church. He then thought of changing the ſubject of the painting for that of the conſignment of the Key to St. Peter; the more ſo, on account of its being the moſt important circumſtance in the life of that Saint, and the foundation of that grand temple, and of many other things, which no painting had ever repreſented. All the Painters who have treated on this ſubject, have expreſſed the allegory of the words of Chriſt, with the keys of a Magazine or Granary in his hand with

material embarraſſment. Mengs, all ſublime and ſpiritual in his ideas, deviſed in that hiſtory, Chriſt, who with one hand confirms St. Peter, and with the other raiſed, points to him the Father Everlaſting, who from a throne of Majeſty, orders his Angels to deſcend, and carry to St. Peter the keys, the which do not make the principal ſubject, and at the ſame time it appears, that he writes with his finger upon a table of marble which is ſupported by his Miniſters, QUODCUNQUE LIGAVERIS SUPER TERRAM, &c. The ſublimity in the expreſsion of the Father, manifeſts him the Creator of all things: In Chriſt one beholds bounty and love: In St. Peter, the moſt lively and determinate faith: In the croud of the Apoſtles, every one correſponds with the circumſtance of his eſtate.

The intelligence of the compoſition, the repoſe of the ſight, the propriety of the drapery, the eaſe of the folds, and the contraſt between the ſerioufneſs of thoſe adorned in cloathing, and the gay and ſprightly nudity of the Angels of Glory, prove well that Mengs deſtined this painting as a competition with thoſe wonders of the Art which are to be found in that Temple.

Notwithſtanding this, he has left only one ſketch ſufficiently finiſhed in clare obſcure, the height of five palms, which perhaps becauſe it was not of the ordinary compoſition, has not been made choice of by people of diſtinction, and probably will fall into the hands of ſome profligate.

I now come to the laſt work, in which Mengs depoſited the very eſſence of his talent, and even ſurpaſſed himſelf. The King having commiſsioned him for three large paintings, for the new Chapel at Aranjuez, he began by the principal one, which repreſented the Annunciation. After having laboured two months to meditate and deſign that painting, in the morning that he began it, I was preſent with Mr. Hevvetſon a very eminent Sculptor; we found him whiſtling and ſinging alone, and demanding the reaſon, he replied, that he was practiſing a ſonata of Corelli's, becauſe he wiſhed to finiſh this painting after the ſtyle of Muſic of that great Compoſer. The modern Painters who receive applauſe from thoſe who arrogate the title of intelligent men, will laugh perhaps, to hear of a painting being deſigned from a Sonata; but very otherwiſe will think thoſe who know the true fundaments of their profeſsion, and have ſtudied the Grecians more than the firſt have done.

There is no doubt but painting much reſembles muſic; the one and the other are arts of imitation; their object is beauty, and their perfection is harmony. A ſound when it is not grand is only a ſimple imitation, nor is a painting beautiful when it imitates only one ſingle object: both would be a faithful copy and no more. Muſic may delight the ear, but as Plato ſays in his ſecond book of Laws, only that is praiſe worthy which expreſſes Beauty, and ought not to be enjoyed alone from being heard, but more from the reaſons of good and intelligent

men. The laws which he calls CITHARŒDICÆ, do not permit the Greeks to uſe any other ſtyle of muſic but that which receives a ſubject, and by analogy they applied the denomination of muſic to other things; as we ſee in Diogenes Laertius, who to denote the ſimple and ſerious dreſs of Polemone, ſays, that it reſembled the Doric ſtyle in muſic.

Mengs who had penetrated into the delicacy of the Grecian taſte, knew, that in rural ſubjects, the paſtoral ought to employ the peonean or flowry ſtyle, and not the dithyrambic or licentious. In a feaſt of Bacchus, the latter was admiſsible and not the former. In a Depoſition ſhould be found the Doric ſtyle, and in a Nativity or Annunciation, the chromatic, the cheerful, and the graceful kind. Mengs being in his character noble and elevated, abhorred every baſe and low argument. He could not endure the burleſque or comic muſic, the childiſh paſſages, and much leſs the ridiculous groteſque, and Arabeſque, of which he thought like Vitruvius, Pliny and other ancients.*

* Nothing ever moved ſo much the indignation of the good Vitruvius, as that depraved taste for the Grotesque and Arabesque. What that venerable author advances, may perhaps properly serve to expose that corruption in painting, which some have adopted in these latter days, excusing themselves by the example of Raphael.

"The good paintings of the ancients (says he) which were "copied from real subjects, are now, from a depraved custom "disused; since they paint at present imaginary monsters, in pre-"ference to existing things. Thus in place of columns they "substitute reeds, and for pediments, fluted arabesque, orna-"mented with rich foliage of young shoots and branches, or "candlesticks, which support the figures upon the pediments of

In fact thoſe things ſpeak only to the ſenſes; but ſolemn muſic, and ſerious painting, fly heroically to the regions moſt purified; and excite ſublime ideas which aggrandize and improve our nature. In a word, the firſt is all material, the

" small houses; and many tender ſtalks, which ſpringing from the " roots, voluptuously incircle without rule the ſedentary figures; " as alſo flowers, which iſſuing from the ſtalks, terminate in half " buſts, many in human effigy, others in that of beaſts, ſuch un- " natural things as never had a being, nor ever can, or ever will " have. In ſpight of which, this new cuſtom has ſo prevailed, " that from ignorant falſe judgment, is deſpiſed the true value of " the Arts. How can one imagine a reed to ſupport a roof, or a " candleſtick a houſe, with all the ornaments of the roof, or " that a ſtalk thus weak and tender, can ſuſtain a ſedentary figure, " and that from the ſame root it can produe half flowers and half " figures? Notwithſtanding men behold the viſible incongruity " of theſe things, yet they do not correct them, but inſtead of " which they are ſtill pleaſed with them whether they have a " natural exiſtence or not: thus the mind deſtroyed by falſe " judgment, no more diſcerns ſuch direct violation of nature, " from that which is drawn with all the rules of reaſon and de- " corum. Never ought we to prize a picture which is not in " every reſpect the ſimilitude of truth; and although it might be " painted with excellence, yet one ought not to give it credit, " without firſt diſcovering in it, clear reaſon, and that without " ſtudy or labour."

The remaining part of his diſcourſe is carried on with equal energy and grace, upon an example of Apaturius Alabandeus, who painted ſuperbly in a theatre of the Trallienſes ſimilar monſtruoſities, which enchanted every one except the mathematician Licinius, who by the force of his reaſoning made him deſtroy that work; and the painter himſelf had ſufficient courage to diſapprove of it, and to furniſh another according to the rules of nature and truth. Reſpecting the paintings of landſcapes, maratime views, and puerile things which Ludius introduced into Rome in the time of Auguſtus, one might conſult Pliny, lib. 35, cap. 10. where in contraſt to thoſe paintings done on walls with ſuch extravagant taſte, he praiſes thoſe of hiſtory, which were the only paintings known to the Greeks, and he expreſſes himſelf thus: SED NULLA GLORIA ARTIFICUM EST, NISI EORUM QUI TABULAS PINXERE: EOQUE VENERABILIOR APPARET ANTIQUITAS.

ſecond is all ſpiritual, but it is neceſſary to add the facility of the one, and the difficulty of the other.

The painting of the Annunciation, as I have already ſaid, was begun by Mengs according to the character of the muſic of Corelli, in which the harmony is ſo well diſtributed, and one finds the ſenſe ſo equally and juſtly raiſed, that no tone either ſtronger or weaker can deſtroy the ſoft impreſsion of each other; and this ſo far from any decadence of monotony, that it ſtill attracts the ſight with ſuch pleaſure that it is with difficulty the eye can be diſtracted from beholding the object, on account of its ideal beauty; and it appears impoſsible that the human mind could have been able to elevate itſelf to ſuch a degree.

In his Madonna one beholds the expreſsion of humility, and modeſt joy, after the turbulence of paſt ſorrows. The beauty of the angel Gabriel, and of the other angels of the Celeſtial aſſembly is correſpondent to the characters of the miniſters of God, and to the expreſsion of their ſerious enjoyment at ſo high an adminiſtration. Diſtinguiſhed above all is the Father everlaſting, and as far as little things can give an idea of great ones, and human things of divine, him alone we can conceive as the image of the Omnipotent and Eternal Creator. Michael Angelo and Raphael have always repreſented him in a fiery and terrible aſpect, in dark robes, which gave him a ſerious air, from which it appears their intention was to excite terror.

Mengs conceived his God to be the Father of Grace, and for that reaſon adorned him with white cloathing, and gave him an expreſsion of majeſty, and bounty to render amiable his empire and power.

This was the laſt work of our Mengs, and in perfecting which he died, exactly at the time of painting the arm of the angel Gabriel which has the flower-de-luce. Few people know that this work is not finiſhed, although it wants much of that which the author called the finiſhing grace. Thus finally Mengs died leaving unfiniſhed his Annunciation, as Apelles did his Venus. The one and the other propoſed to ſurpaſs all their anterior works, but both found themſelves incapable of accompliſhing it. APELLES INCHOAVERAT ALIAM VENEREM COIS, SUPERATURUS ETIAM SUAM ILLAM PRIOREM; INVIDIT MORS PERACTA PARTE; NEC QUI SUCCEDERET OPERI AD PRÆSCRIPTA LINEAMENTA INVENTUS EST. The painting of the Annunciation of Mengs had the ſame fate of the Iris of Ariſtides, of the Tindarides of Nicomacus, of the Medea of Ticomacus as well as of the aforeſaid Venus of Apelles. All paintings left incompleat by their authors are according to Pliny more eſtimable than if they were finiſhed; becauſe, LINEAMENTA RELIQUA; IPSÆQUE COGITATIONES ARTIFICUM SPECTANTUR, ATQUE IN LENOCINIO COMMENDATIONIS DOLOR EST: MANUS CUM ID AGERENT, EXTINCTÆ DESIDERANTUR. This is not the only circumſtance which renders ſimilar theſe two painters: the firſt en-

joyed the favour of Alexander; the latter that of Charles the 3d. The one and the other are ſingular from the grace which impreſſes their works, which is ſuch as one feels and cannot expreſs, that is, a certain ſoftneſs of turn, and facility of expreſsion, which will ever be found eaſy and natural; likewiſe in chooſing thoſe agreeable variations which every part takes when it is ſhown to advantage; and finally, the natural ſweetneſs and harmony of the compoſition and colouring. Apelles had the ſincerity to confeſs he was excelled by Amphion in the compoſition, and by Aſclepiadorus in the perſpective. Mengs was not inferior to him in ſincerity, as we ſhall ſee by many examples. But certainly thoſe two Grecians were not ſuperior to him either in compoſition or perſpective. The injuries of time have deprived us of the writings of Apelles, and Mengs probably will appear more fortunate in having preſerved his. Laſtly Apelles gave his colours a varniſh, which according to Pliny, united the tints and preſerved the colours from duſt and ſtains: the varniſh uſed by Mengs, was certainly not inferior to that of Apelles, notwithſtanding what many inferior ignorant painters have advanced to the contrary.

It will appear perhaps that in theſe diſcourſes I go on, to avoid the mournful relation of the death of my friend. I confeſs that my feelings ſuffer much at the rememberance of the ſad ſcene, for which reaſon I will give but a ſhort account of that doleful tragedy. Fatigue, added

to his different complaints had reduced Mengs to an extreme ſtate of weakneſs; however not without hope of recovery, if he could have purſued a life more tranquil and diſoccupied. His impatience, joined to a moſt ardent imagination, made him take faith in a mountebank, a compatriot of his, who promiſed to cure him in a few days. Thus ſecretly without conſulting any of the faculty, or of his family, he gave him a medicine ſo violent that it exhauſted entirely the little ſtrength which remained in him, and occaſioned him various fits, in which he was left for dead. Recovering however from this attack, though badly, he was poſſeſſed with a reſtleſs deſire of changing to another houſe, moleſting all his people to make all enquiries, and to ſee all the houſes that were to be let in Rome. It is to be remarked that at that time he had three houſes, one which he built, and two which he rented. Nevertheleſs, one morning he removed ſuddenly to a lodging ſituated in the STRADA CONDUTTI, carrying with him the burthenſome weight of all his evils, corporeal and mental; and a few days after he was again removed to the STRADA GREGORIANA, ſtill continuing his clandeſtine correſpondence with the empiric, who had induced him to take certain balſams which a Nun of Narni had diſtributed with much fame and miracle. In compliment to that work he mixed with it (as was afterwards diſcovered) a good doſe of diaphoretic antimony, which in a little time deſtroyed that machine already half ruined. In

that manner a Charlatan, and an unfortunate ſuperſtition combined to deprive the world of a man worthy of much longer life; for at this time he had attained only fifty one years and three months.

His corpſe was interred at the foot of the Janiculum, in the pariſh of Saint Michael, and at the obſequies attended the profeſſors of the Academy of Saint Lucas. His ſtatue of bronze,* which had been modelled under his direction, was afterwards collocated in the Pantheon, by the ſide of that of Raphael, under which was written the following inſcription.

ANT. RAPHAELI. MENGS.
PICTORI. PHILOSOPHO.
IOS. NIC. DE. AZARA. AMICO. SUO. P.
1779.
VIXIT. ANN. 51. MENSES 3. DIES 17.

The paintings and writings of Mengs, inſure him a ſeat in the temple of Immortality, and his goodneſs, and bounty, will engrave on the boſoms of his friends an everlaſting teſtimony to his memory.

The life, and ſtudies of this great man, ought to ſerve as a ſtimulus to every one who would wiſh to apply to, and perfect themſelves in the noble arts. His father directed him ſufficiently well in his infancy, by accuſtoming his eye to exactneſs; but I have heard him many times lament having occupied ſo much time in draw-

* At present it is in marble, having been changed, because the bronze had not a good effect in that place.

ing from prints, which, however good they may be of their kind, always loſe by the inciſion part of the excellence of their originals; their contours are always overcharged, and are wide from that ſimplicity which characterizes true beauty.

The method to give a ſcrupulous reaſon for every thing is neceſſary, but it ought notwithſtanding to be uſed with diſcretion, otherwiſe it accuſtoms youth to obſerve too much the minuteneſs of every little part, and not to attend ſufficiently to the grandeur of the whole. He likewiſe lamented much, that his Father had accuſtomed him to paint in Enamel, and in Miniature; as it afterwards coſt him great trouble to correct the dry, * and minute taſte of that ſpecies of painting. The truth is that Mengs knew latterly how to liberate himſelf intirely from that defect which he has plainly ſhown in thoſe miniatures which he painted by way of complaiſance. I do not know however that he finiſhed more than four, three of the which are in my poſſeſsion.

His veneration for antiquity was great, without being fanatical. Where he found defects he always acknowledged them. To point out the errors, or beauty of a work is this difference; for the one,

* DRY in painting is used metaphorically of those works which want a certain substance and softness, and are as dissected flesh, dry and arid. The rapid passages of one tint to that of another which is different, and lines too exact, take from the beauty of paintings a very great softness, and since miniature is worked by points, which cannot be united in such a way as to make the union imperceptible, it is therefore difficult to paint a miniature which is not DRY.

it is neceſſary that the eye ſhould be endowed with the illuſtration of reaſon, and accompanied by that fine ſenſibility which is not common to all men. Envy, and malignity, in order to abaſe the works of others, and to elevate themſelves by their ruin, look with piercing eyes after their defects ; but he who manifeſts only the errors, and is ſilent on the beauties of a work, is either ignorant, or invidious, or perhaps both the one and the other.

None like Mengs ever underſtood and manifeſted the perfections of the ancient ſtatues. How many times has he contemplated with me the beauties of the ſublime Laocoon till he was fired with enthuſiaſm at its excellence, and on one occaſion obſerved to me that the right tibia of one of his children was much ſhorter than the other.

On account of having given to the King for his Academy, all the chalk figures of his collection of ſtatues, (a collection which had coſt him a ſum ſuperior to his finances,) he thought of writing a treatiſe on the manner of viewing antiquities, and of diſcovering their beauties ; but he feared, that there might be found in Europe, perſons, who from ſome defect, would take umbrage, and declaim againſt the real merit of theſe works. Death has therefore deprived the world of this publication, which I am ſure would have been a model of ſagacity and wiſdom. It was him alone who was capable of diſcovering and demonſtrating, as he did in a letter to Monſignor Fabroni, that the group of Niobe was only

an inferior copy of the famous original mentioned by Pliny. His intelligence in antiquities is clear from the following circumſtance, I one day found in a cave in the Villa of Piſoni at Tivoli, a head much battered and ill treated, ſo as one would ſuppoſe to be unintelligible, yet as ſoon as he ſaw it, he ſaid it was a ſculpture of the time of Alexander the Great: A few days after was found the remainder of the inſcription, which proved it to be the head of the ſame Alexander.

Laſtly, it is worthy to know, that all the technical parts in the hiſtory of the Arts by Winkelman, are of his friend Mengs; which is ſufficient to give an idea, how much he had ſtudied the works of the ancients.

I once diſcovered an ancient houſe on the mountain Eſquilinium with various paintings in freſco: Mengs ran directly to ſee them; and having determined that they ſhould be engraven, he not only offered to furniſh the deſigns, but he undertook to copy them in ſmall, and with incredible regard and attention, executed the three firſt, producing three prodigies of the Art, which he generouſly preſented to me. Death prevented his finiſhing the remainder, which were thirteen of the originals that were diſcovered.

In this ſame Cave of Antiquity was found, among other things, a Venus in marble, of a ſculpture ſo perfect, and of a ſtyle ſo excellent, that the enraptured Mengs wiſhed to reſtore to it with his own hand ſome parts which it had

loſt. In his life he had never uſed a chiſel, yet notwithſtanding the great talent and neceſſary genius required for this ſcience, the marble obeyed him with the ſame docility and perfection as did the colours in painting, and the Profeſſors of the Art confeſſed, that, excepting the works of the ancients of the beſt times, they had never ſeen ſculpture of ſuch correctneſs, grace, and delicacy. Notwithſtanding Mengs had ſatisfied every one beſides, he was himſelf diſſatisfied. He had raiſed to the ſtatue the firſt leg, and taken the ſketch of the reſt, which have however remained imperfect to the time of his death; but I have taken care to reſtore the firſt, preſerving it as an ever valuable treaſure of the Art.

Nothing proves more the degree to which Mengs arrived in the ſtudy of the ancients, than the following fact. It is known to the world, that in Rome, paintings were then ſold as ſtolen from the Herculaneum. Orders were given to find out the thief, who being charged with the fact, declared that the ſuppoſed ancient paintings were the works of his own hands, and he diſperſed them for antiquities in order to gain the more money for them, and he verified the aſſertion by painting others in the Jail in imitation of ſome of the Herculaneum, which he counterfeited wonderfully. He confeſſed to have done many which the Engliſh had bought for originals, and that for ſuch they were then ſhown in England, and conſidered as the moſt precious rarities. He confeſſed likewiſe to have ſold them in Rome, and that there were

many in the muſeum of the Roman College, Father Ambroſius, then Jeſuit, got engraved many of them for his Virgil, and gave the explanation with great ſerioufneſs.

At the ſame time one Caſanuova, pupil of Mengs, produced two paintings of the ſame ancient taſte, and in order to laugh at Winkelman, with whom he was no longer friends, he ſent them ſecretly to him, ſaying they had been dug up in the vicinity of Rome. The good Winkelman believed it, and gave them a pompous explanation in his firſt German edition of the Hiſtory of the Arts; but a little time after, diſcovering the deceit, the Antiquarian became deſperate, and complained bitterly in many letters and journals, and at laſt had recourſe to the lieutenant of the Police at Paris to ſuppreſs the prints of them with the explanation tranſlated into French, which were then preparing for impreſsion.

This mode of counterfeiting ancient paintings likewiſe excited the attention of Mengs. He finiſhed one of the height of ſix palms, and little leſs in width, repreſenting Jove ſeated on a throne, with a pedeſtal at his feet, embracing Ganimede, who is on foot, with a vaſe in the left hand, and a bowl in the other. Imagination the moſt lively could not figure beauty more ideal than that of Ganimede, nor a maſs of divinity like that of Jove: Homer himſelf has not left a deſcription more ſublime of the father of the gods and of men, than has the pencil of Mengs in this painting.

The attention with which he painted the an-

cient wall, is aſtoniſhing. The crevices are done as if they were really broken in the plaſter by the nails, or cramps and ſcrews of the wall. He feigned the parts mended in order to give an idea that the whole was to have been repaired; and the difference between the hand which had executed the repairs, and that which had done the original, ſeems very viſible: all thoſe things ſhew that art could not do more to give credit to the impoſture.

This painting, as well as the two of Caſanuova are ſhown in the houſe of Monſ. Diel of Marſilly. But at the time of his death the Jove was in poſſeſsion of a Mrs. Smith, who lived with him. How ſhe remained Miſtreſs of that painting I know not; but ſhe ſome way ſupported her cauſe with ſtrong pretenſions and ſucceeded.

Winkelman took likewiſe this painting for an antique, and deſcribes it with much erudition in his aforeſaid book, nor do I ſee that he quarrels at the deceit as he did at that of Caſanuova. Perhaps the former irritated the pride of Winkelman, having laboured purpoſely to ſurpriſe his knowledge in the Arts, or perhaps, which is more probable, that he ſtill believed the Jove to be an original till the time of his death.

I know that in the inſide of the plaſtering of the painting, Mengs left a mark to demonſtrate that this piece was a work of his own hand. But before his death he felt repugnance at having practiſed that cheat upon antiquity; and to repair what he had done, he recommended ſe-

riouſly to his ſiſter Signora Tereſa, the wife of Signor Marron, to publiſh that he was the author of that painting.

Of all the modern painters, Mengs gave the priority to Raphael for deſign and expreſsion; to Correggio for grace and clare obſcure; and to Titian for colouring. The firſt occupied his underſtanding, the ſecond his heart, and the third delighted his eye; but he profited of the beauties of all three to form his ſtyle: Thus the bee culls from the different flowers their various ſweets, to make its honey rarer. It is ſufficent to ſee any one of his paintings to reſt convinced of this truth.

Since Raphael poſſeſſed the moſt eſſential part of painting, which is expreſsion, for that reaſon Mengs dedicated to him his greateſt ſtudy, nor ever tired in contemplating his beauties: however there is much variation in the ſtyle of theſe two painters. Raphael knew how to expreſs with his pencil every thing viſible in nature, and likewiſe knew how much the mind influences the body in the movement of the paſsions. A fine diſcernment, which no one ever poſſeſſed in a higher degree, directed him always to chooſe the moſt beautiful paſſages of nature; but we do not ſee that he ever elevated himſelf above it. His Virgins, for example, are always taken from the moſt beautiful and healthy young women that could be found in his time: they have therefore a phyſiognomy too common, and nothing divine. The famous Madonna della Seggiola, what is it more than a ruſtic giving milk

to a beautiful child? Towards the end of his life, when he painted the Galatea in the Farneſina, it appears by a letter written to the Count Baldaſſare Caſtiglione, that he thought of another kind of painting, all ideal, conſiſting of a judicious choice of the parts diſperſed in nature; and by the combination of this choice to form a ſubject all perfect, ſuperior to nature itſelf, in imitation of the Helen of Zeuſis, who in order to render this painting more perfect, collected and combined the different perfections of many of the moſt beautiful young women; nor leſs did Raphael comprehend in what conſiſted the aforeſaid choice. His complaint that in his time beauties were ſcarce, gives one to underſtand that he continued the ſyſtem of copying objects entire, and not of abſtracting the beautiful parts. If Raphael had been doomed for longer life he would perhaps have exalted painting to its higheſt degree of perfection; but this glory was reſerved for Mengs. His figures of divinity have the leaſt of human that they can have: of many perfect parts, which he knew how to chooſe, he formed his compoſitions, omitting the ignoble, the ſuperfluous, and that which marks the miſery of humanity; from whence reſults that ſublime beauty of imagination which characterizes his works.

Raphael, all intent to the ſenſible expreſſion in his works, appears in ſome meaſure to have neglected the clare obſcure, and colouring. His tints are rough, and the fleſh often of a diſagreeable red, which every one muſt diſcern,

who view not his works with prepoſſeſsion. His paintings appear to have a diſagreeable monotony, and for that reaſon do not pleaſe ſo much at firſt ſight, but require reflection. The paintings of Mengs unite the moſt ſublime expreſsion to colouring the moſt juſt and harmonious, added to a true knowledge of the various effects of light, which enchant the ſenſes at firſt view, and delight the underſtanding on further contemplation. They contain, above all, that grace which one feels but cannot expreſs. For this talent Apelles has remained inimitable. The painter D'Urbino copied the moſt beautiful parts of matter: Our German copied it, meliorated it, and exalted it; the one ſacrificed alone to reaſon, the other to reaſon and grace.

Many people will certainly hold theſe propoſitions of mine as ſcandalous, thus directly to defraud Raphael of that veneration which has been his tribute for more than two ages paſt. But nothing will withhold me from manifeſting the truth, when I am ſenſible of it. Whoever wiſhes to condemn me let him firſt examine himſelf to know if he be free from prepoſſeſsion, and any other little paſsion leſs excuſeable.

The touch of the pencil of Mengs was pecular to himſelf. He impaſted his paintings with much colouring, by which they received, and reflected a greater copiouſneſs of light, and in that he was ſo delicate that he always prepared his palettes with his own hands. He knew the fundaments, and chemically the nature of every colour, and the reſult of their ef-

fect after a length of time, when the oil was exhaled. He perfectly underſtood the theory of light, and its decompoſition by the priſm in ſeven colours; but he followed a different ſyſtem which he found out by practice. He reduced all the colours to only three, which were yellow, blue, and red, and by the mixture of thoſe three he formed all the reſt. Black and white he did not admit as colours; and when he could avoid it he never made choice of any other materials than natural earths. He always preferred to paint upon wood, if it were poſsible, becauſe the canvaſs, although it be well preſſed, yet it never preſents the ſurface ſo ſmooth and united as does the wood, and every little cavity, or relief, however ſmall it may be, produces a falſe reflection of light; and beſides, if the canvaſs be a little too large it gives under the pencil, and the hand cannot go firm and exact.

Whoever examines his works, will not find the trace of his pencil as in other painters: all is united like truth and nature, which operate not by ſprings: one tint mixes with another imperceptibly. For that reaſon the young ſtudents, who are put to copy his works, cannot find out how they are done, nor where they are to begin, becauſe they have not the rules which are to be found in others. But what rules? they are receipts rather which ſerve to apply to every thing. Many evils come from what are called SCHOOLS, which in the Arts as well as the Sciences, cannot but produce conſtant error and ignorance. All the founders

of theſe ſeminaries have been men of merit; their diſciples have tried to imitate them, and have been ſucceſsively imitated by others; and ſince imitation always remains in the rear of an original, the laſt muſt neceſſarily find themſelves at ſuch a diſtance, as entirely to loſe ſight of their predeceſſors. This produces abſolutely artiſts by practice, who are what I call PAINTERS BY RECEIPT.

Very few among the many writers on the Arts have ſatisfied Mengs, eſpecially the Authors of the Lives of Painters, and in particular Vaſari; becauſe they treat of every thing except what is eſſential in the Arts. They launch out into a thouſand inſipid anecdotes of their private and domeſtic lives, with the uſeleſs exactneſs of the prices and poſſeſſors of their paintings. They laviſh with a full hand the moſt exaggerated praiſe, and in the epithets of miraculous, and divine: Theſe are the ſubſtances of the lives of Vaſari and his Annotators. That of Correggio is ſo very unworthy that it induced Mengs to prepare anew a memorandum for a certain collection of the lives of painters, which he had undertaken at Florence, but the Editors made little uſe of it: indeed it was not fit for the plan which they have executed.

One certain Falconet, a Sculptor, who did the Equeſtrian Statue of the Czar Peter in bronze, diverted himſelf by writing two volumes in order to vent his choler againſt Pliny, Cicero, the Horſe of Marcus Aurelius, and the moſt illuſtrious ancient and modern writers, and againſt works of

the higheſt reputation in the world. Mengs had too much merit to be forgotten in this Philippic, in which he received a full doſe from Falconet.

Mengs wrote him a letter ſufficiently modeſt, not to juſtify his own perſon, but ſolely for the honor of the Arts. He had a reply, but the diſpute did not go further, either becauſe Mengs did not chooſe to loſe the time, or that becauſe the book was written with too much bitterneſs and paſsion to be able to do any injury, eſpecially in Italy, where one cannot impoſe on the polite Arts, and where criticiſm and ſatire pleaſe if it be delicate and diſcreet, but is deſpiſed when it ſlanders with fury and animoſity.

Of the modern publication of Sir Joſua Raynolds, he ſaid, it was a work which might lead youth into error, becauſe it fixes them upon ſuperficial principles, the only known to that author.

The choleric and arid temper of Mengs made him ſometimes appear ſevere in his manner. In fact, in matters concerning the Arts, he gave his opinion with a ſincerity, which appeared ſevere and rigid; but in the bottom he was the ſame good man, and repented whenever he learnt that his frankneſs had given offence; and more, he would aſsiſt any one with his councils, or give them inſtructions, never making any myſtery of his art.

Clement 14th having bought, by means of a merchant, various paintings at Venice, and wiſhing to have the opinion of Mengs, he told him clearly that they were worth nothing, and that he had been deceived. The holy Father replied

to him, that ſuch and ſuch painters had praiſed them much; to which Mengs anſwered, N. N. and I are two profeſſors, the one praiſes that which is ſuperior to his abilities, and the other condemns that which is inferior to his.

Of a Sculptor, who had put his name to a ſtatue of Diſintereſtedneſs in the ſepulchre of a great Pope, in this manner, N. INVENIT. Mengs ſaid, that he was right in declaring that he had invented it, becauſe certainly he had not taken it from any thing in this world. One might refer to many ſimilar circumſtances, were it not to do injury to Artiſts ſtill living.

The frankneſs of his manner was certainly ſingular, and it is well known that his enthuſiaſm for the Arts extinguiſhed in him, every other paſsion. His veracity, and the horror he bore towards every ſpecies of falſehood, was ever viſible in all his actions; for proof of which I ſhall give only one example of the many which I could adduce.

On entering France by Pont Vauvoiſin, the laſt time he went to Spain, the officers of the Cuſtom houſe ſaw that he had ſome gold boxes ornamented with brilliants, which were given him by different princes. They aſked him if he carried them for ſale, or for his own uſe. He replied that he was not a merchant, and that he did not take ſnuff; with which they were not contented, and inſiſted that he would reply to the ſecond part of their demand, if they were for his own uſe, in order that he might be at liberty to take them; but they were

not able to draw from him a word of untruth, that is, to ſay that he had ever taken ſnuff, for which reaſon they were obliged againſt their will to ſeize the boxes as vendible goods, which he ſuffered, nor ever would have taken the trouble to recover them, if the Marquis de Llano and myſelf had not repreſented the affair at Paris.

I remember another trait of him, which is too characteriſtic to be omitted. The King of Poland requeſted of him an allegorical painting, and when the commiſsion was given him by his miniſter, then reſident in Rome, Mengs replied, that with the greateſt pleaſure he would grant the requeſt which his Majeſty had honored him with, but having already various commiſsions from other ſovereigns, reaſon dictated that he ſhould accompliſh thoſe firſt, according to the orders which he had received; and beſides, that he had given his word to ſome friends, to finiſh them ſome paintings, and thoſe ought to be the firſt, becauſe he preferred friendſhip to all the honors and dignities of this world.

He was a moſt faithful huſband, and tender father to his children, to whom he gave a rigid and excellent education. Nevertheleſs he has much injured his family by his want of œconomy, and careleſſneſs of money. One might reckon that in his laſt eighteen years he received more than one hundred and eighty thouſand Scudi, and ſcarce left enough at his death to pay the expences of his funeral.

Many times have I ſpoken to him of the ſitu-

ation of his family, and propoſed to him to apply one of his ſons to painting. He replied always in the negative, ſaying, IF MY SON SHOULD BE FOUND INFERIOR TO ME, IT WOULD MUCH DISPLEASE ME, AND MUCH MORE WOULD IT VEX ME SHOULD HE BE FOUND MY SUPERIOR. This is an enthuſiaſm to be found alone in great men; and in fact, what can be expected from a man who does not eſteem himſelf? Zeuſis made preſents of his paintings becauſe he thought them invaluable; Parraſius, arrogated to himſelf the ſurname of ABRODIAITOS, and many other genius's of the firſt rank have been ſtill more ſelf confident than Mengs, and believed juſtly SUMERE SUPERBIAM QUÆSITAM MERITIS. Almoſt every ſovereign in Europe has deſired ſome work of Mengs. The Czarina gave him a commiſsion for two paintings, leaving to himſelf both the ſubjects, and the price, and advanced him two thouſand ſcudi on account; but fate did not permit him even to begin the undertaking. It is worthy to be known however, as ſoon as the great Catharine found by the Cardinal de Bernis, the ſtate in which this worthy man had left his family, ſhe made them a preſent of the ſum which ſhe had advanced. The ſum does not merit a remembrance, when ſpeaking of an Empreſs who has aſtoniſhed all Europe by her government, legiſlation, her triumphs, and generoſity; therefore her annals will not find place for ſuch an inſtance of humanity, not to confound the many others which offer in her reign.

The King of Naples wiſhing to introduce the taſte of painting into that Capital, thought of founding an Academy of the Arts, and to put it under the direction of Mengs; he therefore requeſted of the King, his father, to permit him to come to Naples to undertake that charge. His Majeſty conſented, and continued him his penſion in addition to that which his Sicilian Majeſty had granted him for this new commiſsion. The news of this honourable employment, which would have given infinite ſatisfaction to Mengs, arrived at Rome eight days after that of his death; by which he was deprived of receiving this conſolation; and Naples has therefore loſt the profit it would have reaped from his inſtruction.

The Amphitions decreed that Polignotus ſhould be maintained at the public expence in any part of Greece, for having painted the Pecile of Athens. Charles 3d beſtowed his bounty on Mengs whilſt he lived, and after his death has given dowers to his five daughters, and penſions to his two ſons ſufficient to live comfortably.

I have not yet mentioned the writings of Mengs, from which he will derive as much merit as he has obtained by his pencil; I ſhall give an account of them as I publiſh them. I ſhall only here obſerve, that the confuſion of his papers is ſuch, as not to permit me to regulate them with that ſolicitude which they require; and to this fatigue is likewiſe added another, which is to be able to reduce the whole of his writings to one language, ſince he wrote all his compoſitions

promiſcuouſly in the German, Italian, French, and Spaniſh Languages.

The decline of the Arts ought not to be attributed ſo much to the Artiſts, as to the Amateurs, and wealthy people, who order their works. The ignorance and barbarity of the latter, conſtrain the former, when they are employed, to give way to their ideas, if they are of ability; but often the Artiſt is impreſſed by a ſympathy of folly the moſt ſhocking and intriguing.

Theſe gentlemen do not conſider the diſcredit which reſults to them from ſuch conduct, nor the reproach which they purchaſe in perpetuity at their own expence; for no one will look at a fooliſh work, which is executed againſt the rules of reaſon, without calling him ignorant and barbarous who has deſigned it. If thoſe who order, and pretend to judge of productions of the Arts, were really well informed, intelligent would likewiſe be the profeſſors. It is well known that among the Greeks, thoſe were philoſophers who gave orders, as well as thoſe who executed their deſigns; for that reaſon it has been ſaid, a book is wanting which teaches to ſee things; I believe that the writings of Mengs will ſerve for this effect; and this will not be the leaſt of the ſervices which that great man has rendered the Arts.

The Works of Mengs have produced a ſwarm of Critics of every kind; and to know from whence has arrived this delirium, ſome paſſages are quoted from Cumberland, an Engliſhman, who at the beginning of the war was in Spain, and remained there ſome years, fruitleſsly managing ſome political negociation. Returning to his country, he thought of ſucceeding better by publiſhing his ANECDOTES OF EMINENT PAINTERS IN SPAIN DURING THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES, WITH CURSORY REMARKS UPON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE ARTS IN THAT KINGDOM. Vol. II. in 12°. London. 1782.

Mr. Cumberland declares having undertaken this work to make known in England the moſt diſtinguiſhed Spaniſh painters, and the greateſt number of their paintings, as alſo thoſe of the other moſt celebrated foreign painters, who in great numbers are diſperſed in different parts of Spain, and who are beſides little known, eſpecially to the Engliſh. But however, in order not to go over the ſame track already made public by others, and not having ſufficient knowledge of painting, as he many times ingeniouſly confeſſed, he thought to do great things by publiſhing a collection of anecdotes, or of tireſome trifles, which give not the leaſt inſtruction of the Art, not even to the ſimple Amateurs; becauſe he does not deign to characterize any of thoſe painters, nor to deſcribe any of their works, having

declared, that deſcriptions of paintings are as uſeleſs as thoſe of battles.

He is pleaſed neverthelefs to give a deſcription of the SPASIMO DI SICILIA by Raphael as treated of by Mengs, and to that intent manifeſts his taſte and knowledge, ſaying, " With reſpect to " general effect, it always appeared to me, that " there was a want of harmony in the compo- " ſition; the carnations are all remarkably " brown and ruddy (in this manner) nor are the " figures and objects in the back ground kept " down and ſoftened as they are ſeen in nature: " Theſe defects in part may well be owing to " unſkilful retouches and bad modes of cleaning " and varniſhing; one remarkable circumſtance " is that of a leg amongſt the group without an " owner; a redundancy which the author could " never be guilty of, and a collateral proof of " the bad hands through which it has paſſed." And if in that painting (which is one of the moſt beautiful and beſt preſerved of Raphael) are to be found retouches and defects, tell me where they are not to be found?

After having given the anecdotes of the Spaniſh painters of the 16th and 17th Century, this enlightened Author ſays, that in the preſent Age, Spain no longer produces Artiſts of that eminence, and he further obſerves that this decline is not peculiar to Spain, but is notorious in Flanders, France, and ſtill much greater in Italy. " The princes of the Houſe of Bourbon, who " have reigned in Spain, cannot be charged with " having ſtarved the cauſe, if expence be the " meaſure of encouragement: The warmeſt

" admirers of Mengs will not venture to ſay that " his talents were not duly conſidered and re- " warded by the preſent Sovereign, in whoſe " pay and employ he died. The reputation of " this Artiſt ſtood high in Europe, perhaps the " higheſt, but he found no ſolid encouragement " until he went into Spain; in Germany he " painted miniatures, and for England he paint- " ed copies; he was a fugitive from Dreſden " and a beggar in Rome; in the Court of the Ca- " tholic King he found honour and emolument, " and exerciſed his Art in as repectable a ſtile " as Titian did under Charles 5th, Coello un- " der Philip the 2d, or Velazquez in the favour " of Philip the 4th. Certain it is, that under " theſe Princes, Spain produced many eminent " Painters, and was reſorted to by the moſt diſ- " tinguiſhed foreign maſters."

Here Mr.Cumberland inveſtigates the cauſe of this decline of the Arts; he wanders over wilds and countries, and at laſt believes he has found it in Spain to be, from the exceſsive vanity and proud independance of the people of Aragon, and the high dignity of the Caſtilians; and the Churches and Convents being ſaturated with virtue, the good brethren after having feaſted well now ſleep, and think no more of the Artiſts or the Arts; and Spain no longer chooſing its miniſters from the body of the nobility, for this reaſon they have fallen into obſcurity, torpidity, and oblivion.

Upon no Artiſt has Cumberland been ſo diffuſe as upon Mengs. He ſays that, " Many people " of great reputed judgment have regarded

" Mengs as the one bright luminary of mo-
" dern times: In Spain, a man would pay his
" court very ill who did not applaud him, and
" ſome of his enthuſiaſtic admirers join his Edi-
" tor Azara in comparing him to Raphael and
" Correggio."

Then he gives an abridgment of the life of Mengs, extracted from that publiſhed by the aforeſaid Azara. Here, Mengs is no longer a fugitive from Saxony, or beggar at Rome, but ſoon becomes ſomething more, becauſe Mr. Cumberland, after having advanced much beautiful theory upon the judgment which is to be pronounced on Painters, dead and living, DE VIVIS NIL NISI BONUM, DE MORTUIS NIL NISI VERUM, ſays, that Mengs although idolater of Raphael, and more ſtudious of him than Mr. Paſcal of the Bible, finds him notwithſtanding inferior to the Ancient Grecians for that ideal beauty which he certainly wanted, and that therefore Mengs founded his opinion upon hypotheſis, and not upon proof of facts. From this we may derive that Mr. Cumberland has read, and well underſtood the works of Mengs.

He goes on further, and ſays: " Mengs loved
" the truth, but he did not always find it out;
" under all the diſadvantages of a contracted
" education, and ſoured by the ſeverity of his
" father's diſcipline, his habit became ſaturnine
" and moroſe, and his manners unſocial and in-
" elegant; and he ſpoke with contempt of Ar-
" tiſts ſuperior to himſelf."

We ſhall here behold an enlightened proof,

Mengs ſays, " That the book of the Engliſh Rey-
" nolds, would lead youth into error, becauſe it
" abandons them to ſuperficial principles
" the only known to that author." This is a crime for which Cumberland cannot find pardon for Mengs, and Mengs is therefore condemned. He ſays, " If the genius of Mengs had been capable
" of producing a compoſition equal to that of
" the tragic and pathetic Ugolino, I am per-
" ſuaded ſuch a ſentence as the above would
" never have paſſed his lips, but flattery made
" him vain, and ſickneſs rendered him peeviſh;
" he found himſelf at Madrid, in a country with-
" out rivals, and becauſe the Arts had travelled
" out of his ſight he was diſpoſed to think they
" exiſted no where but on his own palette. The
" time perhaps is at hand when our virtuoſi
" (that is the Engliſh) will extend their route to
" Spain, and of theſe ſome one will probably be
" found, who regarding with juſt indignation
" theſe dogmatical decrees of Mengs will take
" in hand the examination of his paintings,
" which I have now enumerated; and we may
" then be told with the authority of ſcience,
" that his NATIVITY though ſo ſpendidly en-
" caſed, and covered with ſuch care that the
" VERY WINDS OF HEAVEN are not permitted
" to VISIT THE FACE TOO ROUGHLY, would
" have owed more to the chryſtal than it does,
" in ſome parts at leaſt, had it been leſs tranſ-
" parent than it is; that it diſcovers an abortive
" and puiſne BAMBINO, which ſeems copied
" from a bottle; that Mengs was an Artiſt who

" had ſeen much, and invented little; that he " diſpenſes neither life nor death to his figures; " excites no terror, rouſes no paſsions, and riſques " no flights; that by ſtudying to avoid particu- " lar defects, he incurs general ones, and paints " with tameneſs and ſervility; that the con- " tracted ſcale and idea of a painter of minia- " tures, as which he was brought up, is to be " traced in all, or moſt of his compoſitions, in " which a finiſhed delicacy of pencil exhibits " the HAND of the Artiſt, but gives no emana- " tions of the SOUL of the Maſter; if it is beauty " it does not warm; if it is ſorrow it excites no " pity: That, when the Angel announces the " ſalutation to Mary, it is a Meſſenger that has " neither uſed diſpatch in the errand, nor grace " in the delivery; that although RUBENS was by " one of his oracular ſayings condemned to the " ignominious dullneſs of a Dutch tranſlator, " MENGS was as capable of painting RUBENS's " Adoration as he was of creating the Star in " the Eaſt that uſhered the Magi: but theſe " are queſtions above my capacity; I reſign " MENGS to abler critics, and REYNOLDS to " better defenders; well contented that poſte- " rity ſhould admire them both, and well aſſured " that the fame of our countryman is eſtabliſh- " ed beyond the reach of envy and detraction."

Nor is yet the elegant Cumberland ſatisfied by this civilized truth, pronounced with ſuch mo- deſty; for he ſays, Rubens' painting of the death of Chriſt, in the hall of the Chapel of the Eſcu- rial, is moſt ſtriking and expreſsive; and that he

had never ſeen a painting which ſpoke ſo ſtrongly to the paſsions as that does. " That though " amongſt other capital performances one ſtops " and feels that RUBENS has touched the paſ- " ſions with ſomething more than a painter's, " with a poet's hand. Contemplating this pic- " ture, I could not help calling to mind the " bitterneſs of MENGS' criticiſm when he is " comparing RUBENS' copy of TITIAN to a " Dutch tranſlation of an elegant author; and " in this train of thinking I could not avoid " drawing a compariſon in my mind between " the piece before me, and that which MENGS " himſelf has compoſed on the like ſubject. " The ſcene is the ſame, the actors the ſame, " and the cataſtrophe not to be diverſified: But " with MENGS all is lifeleſs, cold and flat; me- " thodized by art and meaſured by rule; the " group of an Academy, ſitters for attitudes, " and hirelings for ſorrow; the dead body of " the Chriſt is laid out, and in like manner ex- " poſed to view in the one caſe as in the other, " but what a contraſt! MENGS has indeed la- " boured hard to make a beautiful corpſe; he " has rounded the muſcles and poliſhed the ſkin, " and given it ſuch a hue that it ceaſes to be " fleſh and is a ſhining waxen figure with no " trace of pain or ſufferings paſt; look upon the " other and you contemplate, as it ſhould ſeem " the very perſon, WHO HIMSELF BORE OUR " SORROWS ON THE TREE BY WHOSE STRIPES " WE ARE HEALED. Yet MENGS is the Au- " thor whom courtly prejudice has put above

" compariſon in Spain, whom not to admire is trea-
" ſon againſt ſtate, and whoſe worſhip is become
" canonical, a part almoſt of the orthodox idola-
" try of their religion: Mengs is the critic who,
" profeſſedly treating of the collection of pictures
" in the palace at Madrid, can afford no com-
" mendation or deſcription of RUBENS' capi-
" tal picture of the ADORATION, and records
" his name apparently with no other view but
" to make a needleſs ſacrifice of it to that of TI-
" TIAN, whom it ſeems he had had the teme-
" rity to copy."

Mr. Cumberland terminates his great pictorial work in a political acumen. After having lamented the misfortunes of Spain, under the Carthagenians, Romans, Barbarians, Moors, and the unhappy diſcovery of the new hemiſphere, he finds it yet " reſpectable in its misfortunes, and " formidable though in decay, but the laſt " hand that was put to her ruin held the pen " which ſigned away her reputation and inde-
" pendence in the family compact; generous,
" unſuſpecting, and impolitic, ſhe has bound
" herſelf to an ally, whoſe union like the action
" of certain chemical mixtures, will diſſolve
" every noble particle in her compoſition and
" leave her ſpiritleſs and vapid. France and
" Spain of recent equality and emulation, can
" never find reciprocal advantages in political
" alliance, the intereſts of the weaker party
" muſt of neceſsity become a ſacrifice to thoſe
" of the ſtronger and more artful, and with which
" of the two that ſuperiority actually lies, and

" thoſe advantages are likely to remain, is a " point too clear to admit of a doubt, or need " an explanation."

He who can find in Raphael ſuch deformity muſt certainly find horrible all the world.

LIST OF PAINTINGS
DONE IN SPAIN BY
ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS,
FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY AS WELL AS PRIVATE PERSONS.

In the Royal Palace is the ceiling of the Anti-chamber of the King painted in freſco repreſenting the Council of the Gods, with the Apotheoſis of Hercules.

After the ſame manner is done Aurora in another chamber, by that reaſon called the Chamber of Aurora, and at the four façades are done the four ſeaſons of the year with various ornaments in the freize conſiſting of infants, vaſes, and foliage.

He painted the grand ceiling of the Hall where the King dines, where is repreſented the Apotheoſis of Trajan, and the Temple of Glory.

In the private Oratory of his Majeſty, the Nativity of Chriſt, in freſco: the painting in oil

which was there before has been taken away on account of not being in a good light.

Likewiſe in oil, in the bed chamber of the King, is the famous Deſcent from the Croſs, a piece of more than twelve geometrical feet in height, and wide in proportion in figures as large as nature. In the ſuperior part there is likewiſe another painting on wood, repreſenting the Father Eternal, with the Holy Ghoſt and various Angels.

In the ſame chamber over the doors are four ſubjects upon the Paſsion; that is, the Prayer in the Garden, the Flagellation, the Crucifixion, and the Apparition to Mary Magdalen after the Reſurrection.

In the ſame apartments are two other ſmall paintings, one of the young Saint John (which he did in Spain) and another as companion of Mary Magdalen, which he ſent from Rome; they are a foot and a half in height, and one in breadth.

Another painting is of the Conception, leſs than three feet high, and two feet in breadth; and another of Saint Anthony of Padua, nearly of equal ſize, which his Majeſty always took with him when he travelled.

In the Gallery which leads to the Chamber of his Majeſty, is the Madonna and Child, Saint Joſeph, and Saint John, the height of ſix feet, and four in breadth; being the firſt painting which Mengs painted in oil at Madrid.

The Nativity of Chriſt in oil colours, taken, as it is ſaid from the Oratorio, is removed to the

chamber of the Prince of Aſturias; the height is of near eleven feet, and ſix in breadth.

Another painting of the ſame ſubject on wood, brought from Rome is in his Majeſty's chamber nine feet in height, and ſeven in breadth.

The eſtimation which the King bears for this painting, will be conceived by his having placed before it a cryſtal of equal ſize. This cuſtom of placing cryſtals before paintings has notwithſtanding its inconvenience; becauſe they cannot receive a light ſo as to view well at once the entire; from whence it is neceſſary that the ſpectator moves his ſituation in order to examine the painting by parts. The dark colours reflect the light, and produce the effect of a mirror. The Arts have not yet been able to make the two ſuperfices of a cryſtal equally parallel and the larger it is the more encreaſes the difficulty. A deviation in the ſurface, however imperceptible it may be, alters the reflection of light, and of courſe the figures of the piece. If the paſte of the cryſtal has any colours, which happens to thoſe made of Kali or Barilla, the which having a green ground, all the tints of the painting reflect a certain ſtain of this colour. The air which is ſhut up between the cryſtal and the painting, being confined, alters and damages the colours, and haſtens the ruin of the picture.

A painting of Chriſt Crucified as large as nature, five feet high and four in breadth, is placed in the bed chamber of his Majeſty at Aranjuez.

In the ſame place are two portraits of the King and Queen of Naples, in half figures, of

near five feet high, and of breadth in proportion.

Of the same size in other apartments of that Palace, are two others, one of the same Queen of Naples, and the other of the Arch Dutchess, her sister.

Likewise are there placed the portraits of the great Dukes of Tuscany, with four others of that Royal Family, done at Florence, the first are four feet and a half high, and wide in proportion; the others, five in length.

In the same Palace of Aranjuez in the ceiling of the Theatre he painted a picture in distemper, of Time ravishing Pleasure, which was very much admired as a lively allegory, worthy of his sublime and fruitful genius.

He likewise drew his Majesty and all the Royal Family many times; and a second time the Prince of Asturias; and likewise did two Portraits of the Infanta Donna Carlotta Gioacchina.

The four parts of the day, as sopraportes, are in the Chamber of the Princess, nine feet in height.

For the most Serene Prince of Asturias he did one painting on wood of the Madonna and Child, and Saint Joseph.

Another painting which represented a Youth who pretends to pursue honour, and despises interest, is placed in the house of his Highness at the Escurial.

At San Ildefonso is a painting of the Holy Mary Magdalen, in more than half figure, placed in the chamber of Dispatches.

For the Infant Don Lewis he did a piece of the Madonna and Child, and Saint Joſeph, four feet in length, and three in breadth.

A portrait of his Highneſs larger than half figure is not finiſhed.

He painted Saint Paſqual Baylon for the High Altar of the Church of the Royal Convent of that name at Aranjuez.

The moſt Serene Infant Don Gabriel has likewiſe a piece of the Prayer in the Garden, which is not finiſhed.

PAINTINGS FOR PRIVATE PERSONS.

The principal painting at Saint Iſidore, repreſents the Holy Trinity, with the Madonna, Saint Damaſus, and other Spaniſh Saints, which he did in figures much larger than nature, of the height of ſeventeen feet, and twelve in breadth.

For the King of Denmark, he did the Portrait of his Majeſty of Spain, full ſize, armed, on foot, under a magnificent canopy; with all the ornaments, and attributes expreſsive of his Spaniſh Majeſty, of the height of twelve feet, and nine in width: It was exhibited in public at Madrid on a feaſt day.

Another painting is the Aſſumption, with the Father Eternal, and a great accompaniement of Angels; figures as large as nature, twelve feet high and ſeven in breadth.

Another of Saint John the Baptiſt preaching,

is ſix feet high, and leſs than five in breadth, both for the Count of Rivadavia. Mengs finiſhed this painting in a particular ſtyle never uſed by him before. The ſituation in which it was to be placed has a ſky light which ſtrikes upon the eyes of the ſpectators; for this reaſon, he forced nature a little, made great maſſes, and marked the parts with great force. It appears a painting after the ſtyle of Michael Angelo, when he is not overcharged, or of Raphael when he wiſhes to combat with that of the Conflagration of Borgo.

He did the Portrait of the Duke of Alva in half figure.

And two more of the Dutcheſs of Hueſcar, now the Dutcheſs of Arcos.

Another for the Dutcheſs of Medina Cœli, ſeated on a chair.

Another of a figure entire in a maſque habit, for the Marchioneſs of Llano.

And for the ſame Lady another of half figure.

He painted likewiſe the Portrait of Don Peter Campomanes, larger than half figure.

Another of Don Philip de Caſtro, of half figure, but of that the head only is finiſhed.

He did a Madonna in grief, for Don Antonio de la Quadra, Director General of the Poſts.

A Saint Peter ſeated, of natural ſize, he gave to his barber, Peter Martinez.

He finiſhed likewiſe in the Palace a large painting of the Aſcenſion of our Lord, begun at Rome by commiſsion from the Court of Dreſden.

He did many Portraits of himſelf little leſs than half figure, which he gave to his friends, and among others to Don Bernardo de Yriarte.

He left imperfect the Portrait of Don Americus Pini, Adjutant of the King's chamber, but it wanted ſomething of being finiſhed. He likewiſe began one of the Marquis de Llano, his friend and mine.

Theſe as well as other works were ſent to Rome to be finiſhed, which are not mentioned here, having remained very unperfect.

REFLECTIONS

UPON BEAUTY AND TASTE IN PAINTING,

By ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

THIS Treatiſe, in the beginning, was written principally for my own uſe, and with the deſire only of retracing in it ſome uſeful truths. When it was almoſt finiſhed I was deſired by an Academy in Germany to give it to them, which, however, was impeded by various accidents. This Academy was however diſſolved, and my Treatiſe remained with me. Some time after, when I caſually peruſed it, I was not content with the whole, and purpoſed to write it anew, leaving out ſome things, and adding many others; but, conſidering what time and fatigue it required, and knowing myſelf incapable of ornamenting my ſentiments and ideas with a

beautiful ſtyle, I reſolved to relinquiſh and abandon the whole. On peruſing it again, it appeared to me, that for the truths which it contained, it ought not to remain in oblivion, and that theſe truths might be uſeful to many; from which reflections, and by perſuaſion of my friend Winkelman, to whom I have dedicated it, I was induced, at laſt, to prepare it for publication. I ſhould not wiſh, otherwiſe, to give it my name, becauſe I am no author by profeſsion, nor do I wiſh to expoſe myſelf to the criticiſm of thoſe, who, perhaps, will not underſtand me.

I entreat the Students of Painting, who read this Treatiſe, to read it with the greateſt attention, and to be perſuaded that, for the reaſoning, and the track which they will find therein indicated, I am arrived in the Art of Painting to a higher degree than many of my contemporaries; and to be aſſured, likewiſe, that the work which I now offer them is the gift of my heart. If they reflect well upon what I advance, and to ſuch reflections unite unwearied diligence, and uninterrupted application, I can aſſert that they will receive advantages of no inferior nature.

My intention has been, firſt, to explain what is beauty, ſince men are of ſuch various opinions upon this ſubject. Secondly, to explain what is Taſte, as the major part of thoſe who have written on the ſame do not give a clear information why the word taſte is uſed in ſpeaking of Painting. Finally, I have

endeavoured to render more intelligible what is Taſte, by means of examples, which the firſt Profeſſors have given upon the ſame ; in the mean time, being the firſt part rather unconnected with Painting, I feared having rendered the work uſeleſs to thoſe for whom it was my intention to write ; namely, Painters, for which reaſon I have ſince ſought to adduce ſuch examples as furniſh me with motives to ſpeak of all the rules of the art.

It is neceſſary to know that all thoſe parts, which I exalt and praiſe of illuſtrious painters, ought to be held as ſo many rules and examples of imitation.

The ſtudents of painting will remember not to loſe too much time in the ſubtilties which are herein written, ſince in the beginning they will not be of any ſervice. The firſt care of a beginner ought to be to accuſtom the eye to exactneſs and preciſion, ſo as by that to become capable of imitating any thing. At the ſame time, he ought to apply the hand to exerciſe and quickneſs, in a manner, that it ſhould become obedient to perform all that which he deſires, and then is the time to begin the rules and ſtudy the ſcientific part of the art. I therefore prefer practice and execution to theory and ſcientific rules, becauſe the latter can be learnt in an advanced ſtate, but for the exerciſe and the uſe of a juſt eye, it is indiſpenſible to attain a certain age ; that is to ſay, when one has not acquired any depraved cuſtom ; ſince, he who once has taken a bad habit, in a

more advanced age will be incapable of receiving a good one.

It is neceſſary, therefore, that this Treatiſe be read by various claſſes of Painters, and alſo with various reflections.

The beginner ought to read it only to comprehend what is vaſt and difficult in the art, to the end that he may haſten and not loſe time in learning the inferior parts of it; in the mean time, notwithſtanding ſuch parts are the materials and fundaments of the art, they are but of little uſe until they are adjoined to all the other parts of the grand edifice.

The ſecond claſs of Painters, that is to ſay, thoſe who are already in full poſſeſsion of the firſt principles, are for whom this book is chiefly written, in order that they may learn what is Taſte, and examine if they themſelves poſſeſs it from Nature or not, or by what means or examples they can acquire it.

The profeſsional painter may likewiſe find ſomething uſeful in this Treatiſe, as much in diſtinguiſhing the true beauties of the great maſters, as to guide youth properly in the ſtudy of that art.

I ſpeak freely, becauſe I know in this world we have no other certain means to prove the value of a thing, than the experience of its utility. Of this experience I am myſelf an example, ſince all which I know I have learnt by the way and manner of thinking deſcribed in this Treatiſe.

If ſome parts of this work ſhould be found

difficult to be underſtood, I am always ready to give further explanations, and if it happens that I have been deceived in any thing, I ſhall not ſuffer myſelf ſo much to be ſeduced by a vain ambition, as not to confeſs the error in which I have fallen, and ſhall defend myſelf with the moſt clear proofs every time I do not think myſelf erroneous.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

EXPLANATION OF BEAUTY.

SINCE perfection is not allotted to mankind, and is only to be found in God, and as nothing is comprehenſible to our nature except that which falls under the conviction of the ſenſes; thus the Omnipotent has thought fit to imprint a viſible IDEA of that perfection, which is what we call BEAUTY.

This Beauty is found in all things, whenever our ideas and intellectual ſenſes cannot carry the imagination beyond the perfection which we behold in the thing created.

This, therefore, reſembles the nature of a point. A point ought to be indiviſible, from whence it is always, properly ſpeaking, incomprehenſible; but ſince it is of advantage to form a viſible idea, therefore, that mark which is conſidered mathematically indiviſible, is called

a visible point. We ought, therefore, to figure to ourselves, that perfection is as a mathematical or indivisible point, containing in itself all the properties of the Celestial attributes which are not to be found in matter, because all matter is imperfect, therefore we have imagined a kind of perfection adapted to the human comprehension; that is, when our senses are not capable of discovering what are the imperfections of a thing, then this appearance of perfection is called BEAUTY. This (as has already been said) is found in every thing, and in all things together, and is the perfection of matter; and between that and Divine perfection subsists the same difference as between the two points, therefore one might call Beauty, visible perfection, the same as we call a point, visible. And since in the visible point is always the invisible; thus in Beauty there is always perfection, although invisible. The eye does not see any of that indivisible perfection, but the soul feels and comprehends it, since the soul, as well as perfection has been derived from God, the fountain and source of every perfect thing.

Plato * calls the emotions which beauty produces upon the soul, a remembrance of supreme perfection, and believes that to be the cause of its enchanting power. Perhaps I might dream with the same success, if I said that the soul is stricken with beauty because they are derived

* Plato in Phædro, III, p. 249.

from the ſame origin ; that is to ſay, tranſported in a momentary beatitude, which it hopes and expects to have received from God to all eternity, but which is ſoon loſt in all matter.

CHAP. II.

THE CAUSE OF BEAUTY IN THINGS VISIBLE.

NOTHING is viſible without matter, the which ought to have a form, and that form is the meaſure of its force or power; that power has been given it by the Creator, and is the cauſe of its form. In the firſt form of Nature one does not behold Beauty, becauſe it is not yet unfolded to the ſight, and although it be diſcoverable, it is not therefore comprehenſible. From this firſt form, Reaſon has compoſed others, which are already viſible, and that firſt viſibility is ſhown by colours. Theſe colours are different, according to the diverſity of their aſpect; that is, according as the rays of light produce different effects upon the ſuperfice. When theſe firſt ſubtilties, viſible aſpects, and forms, are ſimple and uniform, they are called pure, becauſe light cauſes only one effect in them, and that effect produces Beauty. To prove that

is thus, that is, that colours ariſe, or are produced from the aſpect of uniform matter, is ſeen by means of a priſm; and that uniformity produces beauty, is evident, becauſe the moſt beautiful red deſtroys the beſt yellow, and blue deſtroys red; then mixing all the three, red, yellow, and blue, together, the whole are deſtroyed. If we ſee that Nature has given colours ſo oppoſite to matter, it ariſes from a diverſity in its little forms or particles, and by the mixture of the ſame. From theſe little forms Nature has compoſed others greater, of which we cannot judge as being beautiful or ugly according to their colours, but according to their aſpect; and alſo in this it is uniformity which is the baſis of its beauty. For this reaſon, the circular form is the moſt perfect of all; becauſe it contains but one motive, which is the extenſion of its proper centre; and thoſe which have different motives are always inferior in perfection; but, nevertheleſs, they have alſo their beauty, becauſe thoſe parts which are not uniform, are therefore adapted to different ſignifications, as one ſees clearly in Nature, where many things deprived of beauty, become beautiful by the correſpondence which one part has with another. All Nature is made to move, and to pleaſe; for that reaſon the parts active ought to be the ſame, nor leſs, than the parts paſsive; from whence it is neceſſary that there be likewiſe a diverſity of beauty, ſince the parts paſsive ſhould neceſſarily be leſs perfect than the parts active.

Theſe imperfect parts however are not for this leſs eſtimable, and have alſo in their imperfections a kind of beauty natural to them, and which is manifeſted when they are diſpoſed of according to their deſtiny. For this reaſon there is Beauty in all things, ſince nature has done nothing in vain; and, as is already ſaid, there is Beauty in every thing which appears perfect in the idea and aſpect to which it appertains. Idea comes from the cognition of the deſtination of a thing, and that cognition is derived from the ſoul. Beauty is likewiſe to be found in any thing, when its cauſe is conformable to its deſtiny. It is very natural therefore that there are parts more or leſs perfect or imperfect; ſince Nature is like a Republic, to which belong all its inhabitants and citizens, but all are not of an equal rank, and dignity; and thus it is alſo in nature; all the parts cannot be equally beautiful and perfect; and here it is neceſſary to reflect, that the parts moſt beautiful and perfect, are often leſs uſeful than thoſe which are leſs perfect; becauſe the firſt are ſuſceptible of various operations, and can produce more than one effect; and the latter, to the contrary, are capable of one ſole effect, and ſerve but one end only. This is confirmed in all colours, and in all aſpects. The three perfect colours are certainly yellow, red, and blue; and there is one only idea of their perfection, which is, when they are found at an equal diſtance from any other colour. The colours leſs perfect are therefore compoſed, as are the roſe, the green, the

violet, which can be of different qualities, according as they more or leſs approach the perfect colours; and the colours compoſed of theſe three, are ſuſceptible of a variation almoſt infinite.

The leſs a colour is perfect the more it can be varied; and this variation does not finiſh, except when the compoſition no longer repreſents any principal idea diſtinguiſhable of colour; and then it becomes like a thing lifeleſs, and inſignificant. The ſame happens in forms and aſpects. The circular form only is truly perfect, and this, as well as the equilateral figures, cannot be ſo but in one manner only. But thoſe of different ſides are alſo ſuſceptible of various ſignifications, and adapted to different ideas; from whence they become as uſeful as the perfect figures. The reaſon of that is herein given, in ſpeaking of colours; and ſince the imperfect colours are as uſeful as thoſe which are perfect, becauſe they are adapted to an almoſt infinite variation, ſo are likewiſe imperfect figures, becauſe they are equally variable, and in the end reſt deprived of ſignification, and fall again into obſcurity. Any thing is conſidered beautiful, when it correſponds with the idea which we have of that ſame thing: this is evident in different things, which though entirely oppoſite to one another are praiſed as being beautiful. We call beautiful, for inſtance, a ſtone of one colour only, and beautiful likewiſe another, which is of more colours, and of a variety of marks and veins: If therefore one only kind of perfection were the cauſe of beauty, one of

theſe ſtones would have been ſaid to be beautiful, and the other ugly; and therefore if the one and the other are called beautiful, it is becauſe they agree with the idea which we have of the ſame; and for that reaſon the ſtone which we think ought to be uniform, and of one colour only, when it is found ſtained is called ugly; and the other ſtone which according to the accuſtomed idea ought to be ſtained, and of many colours, if it were found too uniform it would likewiſe be ugly, becauſe the one and the other appear imperfect, in the idea which we have of them. The ſame happens in all things created. A child would be ugly if it had the face of a man of mature age: a man is ugly when he has the face of a woman; and a woman is certainly not beautiful with a beard, or with the features of a man.

Theſe reflections are ſufficient to ſhow the principal cauſe of Beauty; from whence I conclude that beauty is derived from the uniformity of matter with the ideas; the ideas ariſe from the cognition of the deſtination of a thing; this cognition originates from experience, and ſpeculation upon the general effects of things; the general effects ariſe from the deſtination which the Creator has thought fit to give theſe things; this deſtination has for foundation the graduate diſpoſition of the perfections of nature; and finally, above all, the firſt cauſe is in the immenſity of divine wiſdom.

CHAP. III.

THE EFFECTS OF BEAUTY.

BEAUTY conſiſts in the perfection of matter according to our ideas. Since God alone is perfect, Beauty is for that reaſon a thing divine. The more beautiful a thing is, the more it is animated. Beauty is the ſoul of matter. As the ſoul of man is the cauſe of his being, thus alſo is Beauty the ſoul of figures; and that which is not beautiful is like death in man. This Beauty has a power which delights and enchants; and being of a ſpirit, moves the ſoul of man, encreaſes, if we may ſo ſay, its ſtrength, and makes it in ſome moments forget that it is confined within the narrow centre of the body. From this is derived the attractive power of Beauty. As ſoon as the eye beholds a beautiful object, the ſoul is awakened, and wiſhes to unite itſelf with it; man therefore ſeeks to approach, and accoſt it. Beauty tranſports the ſenſes of man beyond what is human; all is changed and in commotion in him; ſo much ſo, that if this enthuſiaſm is of ſome duration he falls ſilently into a kind of ſadneſs: then it is that the ſoul of man is no more than the mere appearance of perfection.

Nature has for that reaſon produced many

gradations of Beauty, in order to hold the human ſpirit, by the variety, in equal and continued commotion. Beauty attracts every one, becauſe its power is uniform, and ſympathetic with the ſoul of man. He who ſeeks it, finds it in every thing and every where, ſince it is the light of all matter, and the ſimilitude of the ſame Divinity.

CHAP. IV.

IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIND PERFECTION IN NATURE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT FOUND THERE.

ALTHOUGH Beauty is never found in Nature in a degree truly perfect, one ought not therefore to believe, that properly it is not there to be found, and that to wiſh to imitate it one has to tranſgreſs the laws of truth. Nature has made all things in ſuch a manner, that every thing may be perfect according to its deſtiny; but ſince perfection participates ſo much of Divinity, for that reaſon few things in Nature are found perfect, and many things imperfect. The perfect is that which one ſees full of reaſon; and ſince each figure has only one centre, or middle point, thus has alſo all Nature, in every kind,

one only centre, in which is contained all the perfection of its circumference. The Centre is a ſole point, and in the circumference of the figure it comprehends an infinity of points, which are all imperfect in compariſon to that of the centre. As among ſtones, one only kind is perfect, which is the diamond, among all metals only gold, and among animated creatures here below is man alone; thus there is likewiſe a diſtinction in each ſpecies apart, and few are thoſe which are truly perfect. Since man does not originate of himſelf, but depends firſt to ſee the light, and then to take his form from extraneous accidents, thus it is almoſt impoſsible that he ſhould be perfectly beautiful. That man is ſcarce ever to be found who is not ſubject to paſsions, which, in a leſſer or greater degree affect his being; nor is there to be found one who has not his predilectual, and predominant affections. The human body has all theſe affections, and paſsions, in different parts, on which they operate and influence particularly. The ſame happens in women, who, ſcarce gravid, are tormented and oppreſsed by their paſsions and affections, even to the injury of their health, and that of the infant which they bear; from whence the ſoul of the embryo is not at liberty to finiſh the formation of its body to perfection; for if it could operate without impediment, it would form the body certainly perfect, and in conſequence beautiful.* This is the mo-

* From this, and from other propositions, one sees a mixture of Platonism and Leibnizianism, which Winkelman in his Metaphorical parts had insinuated to Mengs. The force of the soul

tive by which, from the beauty and body of a perſon one judges of his ſtrength, and of the quality of his ſpirit, forming eaſily a good opinion of him who is beautiful and well made; but becauſe the ſoul is thus impeded in the womb, we ſee but few perſons born beautiful. What contributes beſides to this is, the diverſity of people, of climate, of paſsions, and of vices which predominate in different countries, and are the cauſe why entire nations are diſtinguiſhable by their aſpect. To prove that we ſhould otherwiſe find man a perfect Beauty is deducted from this, that almoſt every one has ſome parts of his body beautiful, and theſe parts are more conformable than the others to the utility and object of the whole ſtructure. Man therefore would be beautiful, if the accidents which are natural to him did not ſpoil him. I ſpeak of man in being the part of all Nature, in which, more than in any other appears true Beauty.

which forms the body without knowing how, and plastic Nature, which some have brought to light, are ideas which apparently ought not to have access in this age. Nevertheless we still find those who collect them, and this gave motive to the Historian of the Academy of Sciences at Paris to say in the Eulogy of M. Hartsoeker, "THAT NO IDEA OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY IS "SO PROSCRIBED THAT ONE MAY NOT HOPE FOR ITS BEING "RENEWED IN THE MODERN."

CHAP. V.

ART CAN SURPASS NATURE IN BEAUTY.

THE Art of painting is ſaid to be an imitation of Nature; from whence it appears, that in its perfection it ought to be inferior to it; but this ſubſiſts conditionally. There are things in Nature which Art cannot entirely imitate, and where the one appears feeble and weak in compariſon to the other, as, for inſtance, in imitating light or darkneſs. To the contrary Art has one thing very important, in which it by far ſurpaſſes Nature, which is in Beauty. Nature, in its productions, is ſubject to a variety of accidents; Art therefore operates freely, ſince it avails itſelf of materials entirely flexible, and which nothing reſiſts. The Art of Painting is, to chooſe of all the ſubjects of Nature, the moſt beautiful, gathering, and placing together the materials of different places, and the beauty of various perſons: to the contrary, for inſtance, Nature, to form man, is conſtrained to take the material part of the mother only, ſubject to all its accidents; from whence it is viſible that a portrait might be more beautiful than man in Nature. Whenever is there found united in one man, greatneſs of ſoul, harmony and proportion of the body; a virtuous mind, and members pliant and robuſt? And what man finds

himſelf in ſuch a perfect ſtate of health, as never to be agrieved by his occupations, employments, and purſuits? But in Painting, one can unite and expreſs every good quality of him: it is ſufficient to obſerve, and to expreſs, exactneſs in the deſign, grandeur in the figure, eaſe in the poſture, beauty in the members, force in the breaſt, agility in the legs, ſtrength in the ſhoulders and arms, ſincerity on the front and brow, prudence in the eyes, health on the cheek, and grace and lovelineſs on the lips; carrying itſelf thus throughout all the parts, from the greateſt to the ſmalleſt, as much in the figure of man, as in that of woman, and by adapting theſe modifications according to the diverſity of their aſpects and expreſsions, one may ſee that Art can eaſily ſurpaſs Nature; for ſince no flower produces honey from every part, the Bee viſits that only from which it can extract the richeſt ſweets; thus can alſo the ſkilful painter gather from all the creation the beſt and moſt beautiful parts of nature, and produce by this Artifice the greateſt expreſsion and ſweetneſs.

That by a good choice one may meliorate the things in Nature, becomes clear from the two charming and agreeable arts of Poetry and Muſic. The latter of which is not more than a collection of all the tones which are found in Nature, put in meaſure, and which from a good choice receives a motive, and acquires a ſpirit capable of moving the ſoul of man; and this ſpirit is called Harmony. Thus, therefore, Poetry is no more than the ordinary diſcourſe of men; by

whom is put in meaſured order, firſt the ſentiments, and then the words; and by a choice of the moſt ſonorous and grateful of theſe and by means of a kind of harmony, is found the meaſure of the ſyllable. Then, ſince Muſic and Poetry have a force infinitely greater than that of tones and words mixed together without any order, thus, therefore, Painting, worthy ſiſter of the ſame Arts, receives from the order in which it is placed, and from the good choice which refuſes that which is ſuperfluous, and inſignificant, an additional force, or one might ſay its whole being.

It is adviſeable therefore that the adepts of this Art ſhould never think the moſt ſublime degree is already occupied, and that it cannot be exalted higher. Such an idea, as well as it is falſe, is likewiſe prejudicial to them. None of the moderns have followed the road of perfection like the ancient Grecians; for the whole, ſince the art has been almoſt revived anew, have only had in view Truth and the way of pleaſing; and if beſides any one had carried to the higheſt perfection thoſe parts of the Art which they profeſſed, nevertheleſs, for thoſe who ſeek perfection, there would remain to unite the particular perfections of the one with thoſe of the other, making a perfect whole. No one ought therefore to be intimidated from beholding others great, celebrated, and perfect; on the contrary, their own greatneſs and fame, ought to ſerve them as a ſtimulus to combat with them, and diſpute the poſt which they occupy; and if alſo they remain inferior, it will, notwithſtanding, be a glory to have been

excelled by thoſe whom they have only imitated. Whoever ſeeks greatneſs, will always appear great, although in trifles; and as a traveller who accompliſhes the half of his journey judges, if he continues he will arrive at the end, ſo one ſhould judge that a virtuoſo, once on the road to perfection, proceeding with conſtancy may ſecure in time the point he has attempted. I can beſides affirm, as I have already ſaid, that none of the modern Painters, whoſe works I have ſeen, have ſought to attain the higheſt perfection, nor do I believe that the Art will be ever more caried to that ſublime degree of beauty and perfection in which it was found among the ancient Greeks, except by chance ſhould ariſe in Italy another Athens.

This is what I have wiſhed to ſay of Beauty, which is therefore the formed and viſible perfection of Matter; becauſe abſolute perfection is a ſpirit inviſible. The perfection of Matter conſiſts in its conformity with our ideas, the which likewiſe conſiſt in the cognition of its deſtiny. A thing is perfect when it expreſſes an idea conformable to itſelf. Perfections are diſtributed in Nature like ſo many offices. That thing which is moſt capable, and beſt adapted to fill its office, is in its kind the moſt perfect; for this reaſon alſo, that which is ugly ſometimes becomes beautiful on account of the character it repreſents. That thing which has only one motive conformable to its being, is of a higher rank of Beauty than that which has more ſpirit, and is more ſublime than that which has more matter. The ſpiritual

has the power to adminiſter its perfecton to the material, which can receive it. It is therefore neceſſary that the virtuoſo who would wiſh to produce any thing beautiful, ſhould propoſe to riſe gradually from matter; to attempt nothing without reaſon, nothing ſuperflous, and nothing which is lifeleſs, or without expreſsion, ſince that deſtroys every thing in which it enters: his genius ought to ſeek to give perfection to matter, by means of a good choice. Genius is the Reaſon of Painters: this Reaſon ought to have an empire over Matter, and its principal diligence ought to be to determine the motives of things, and to follow in an entire work one principal motive, ſo that it may appear one motive only, the which ſhould be diſtributed even in the ſmalleſt parts of matter. It is then neceſſary that he chooſes the beſt adapted parts of Nature, to render clear and intelligible his idea to thoſe who view it. As Nature has diſtributed her perfections in different degrees, thus ought likewiſe the painter in giving different things their ſignifications, apply different expreſsions; but all ſhould be directed towards the principle ſignification; then the ſpectator diſtingiuſhes in each the idea, and in the whole together the motive of the work, which he will praiſe as perfect, when the quality of the materials of each part is conformable to his ideas; then it is that his affection will be moved by the beauty which appears in all its parts; becauſe each part, having its motive and ſpirit, all the work will be full of it, and for that reaſon will pleaſe, and will have the higheſt degree of perfection.

As the Creator of Nature has given a perfection to every thing, and has made all Nature to appear beautiful, admirable, and worthy of him; thus ought alſo the painter to apply, and leave in each expreſsion, and from each little ſtroke of the pencil, a counterſign of his genius and wiſdom, to the end that his work may be ever eſteemed as worthy of a rational being.

PART THE SECOND.

OF TASTE.

CHAP. I.

THE ORIGIN OF THAT NAME AS APPLIED TO THE ARTS.

ALL human works are imperfect, and if any are eſteemed as perfect, it is becauſe we do not know their defects. Human perfection is but a ſimilitude or a ſhadow of true perfection, and for that reaſon, the word Taſte is uſed in painting, to ſignify that a work can have the taſte of perfection without being truly perfect. This taſte in painting, is in part like that of the palate, becauſe the one touches the mouth, and tongue, and the other moves the eye and the intellect. In both, Taſte has many gradations, which are all comprehended under the ſame denomination; and ſince many things are of a ſweet, bitter, or ſour taſte,

without the bitter, ſour, and ſweet being of equal ſtrength, thus, is alſo in painting, the great, the delicate, and the forcible, and each of theſe in different and diſtinct degrees.

CHAP. II.

EXPLANATION OF TASTE.

ALL that which does not touch or move man, cannot pleaſe him; and no food is agreeable unleſs it has ſome diſtinguiſhable flavour. In the ſame manner in painting it is likewiſe neceſſary, that every thing which the eye beholds ſhould touch and effect the nerves in order to be pleaſing.

Taſte is variable in every one, as much as ſtyle and manners, with this only difference, that it is found, in general, either good or bad, and is judged according as it is; ſo that Taſte might be praiſe-worthy when it is no ways perfect; and ſince we call many things ſweet or ſour, which ſavour very little of that flavour, thus, alſo, a painting might be of good taſte, although it partakes very little of perfection. The Taſte of painting can alſo be of good or bad habitude, as well as that of the flavour, ſince

the eye becomes habituated as well as the palate. Strong food, and liquors, deſtroy the taſte, but that which is light preſerves the moſt delicate flavor. Thus it is likewiſe in painting: thoſe pieces which are forced or overcharged, deſtroy the taſte of the art, but the ſimply beautiful works accuſtom the eye to a more delicate ſenſe. The taſte of thoſe who like heavy and gaudy pieces, ariſes from a low and vulgar mind; whereas, thoſe who like only the cool and tender ſubjects, have, in general, a taſte very refined; and this diverſity is not only found in the amateurs, but in the profeſſors of the art.

CHAP. III.

DETERMINATIONS, AND RULES FOR TASTE.

THE beſt Taſte which Nature can give, is that of the Medium, ſince it pleaſes mankind in general. Taſte is that which determines painters in their choice, and from that choice we judge and know if their taſte be good or bad. Good, and the beſt, is that taſte which is between the two extremes, and each extreme is bad.

The Paintings which are commonly praiſed, and eſteemed of good taſte, are thoſe in which one ſees well expreſſed the principal objects, with a certain eaſe, which hides all labour and art. Both theſe ſtyles are pleaſing, and give great credit to the author, whom one believes to have had great judgment in chooſing ſo well the principal things, and muſt have had great talents to have performed his work with ſuch facility.

The grandeur of Taſte conſiſts in the choice of parts ſuperior to the common, as well in Man as in Nature, and by hiding ſubordinate and trivial parts, which are not abſolutely neceſſary.

Meanneſs in Taſte, is that which expreſſes the great and the inferior in the ſame manner; from whence the whole becomes within the medium, and almoſt without Taſte *.

Beautiful Taſte is, finally, that which expreſſes the moſt beautiful parts of Nature. This, therefore, is ſuperior to mediocrity, and is ſublime in compariſon to that which expreſſes but the inferior and ugly parts of Nature. In the ſame manner are the pleaſing and ſignificant Taſtes, with many others that one might mention.

Taſte is that which, in painting, produces and determines a principal ſcope, and cauſes one to chooſe or reject that which is conformable to, or contrary to the ſame. From whence it is that when we ſee a work in which the whole is

* Meanness of Taste expresses distinctly all little things; and therefore the whole becomes little.

expreſſed without diſtinction and variety, we pronounce the author to have been void of Taſte; becauſe he has not diſtinguiſhed himſelf by any thing particular; and ſuch works remain, if we may ſo ſay, without any expreſsion. The works of every painter ſucceed according to the choice he makes, in which is to be underſtood, the colouring, clare obſcure, drapery, and every other thing relative to painting. If he chooſes the parts moſt beautiful and grand, he will produce works of the beſt taſte. All that is beautiful which diſcovers the good quality of a thing, and the reverſe is that which ſhows only the bad parts. Painters, therefore, conſider the neceſſary perfection of any thing which they behold, and make choice of thoſe things which beſt agree with their deſires, ſince theſe muſt be beautiful. On the other hand, they reject that which they would wiſh to be otherwiſe than it is, ſince ſuch muſt be void of Beauty.

From the conſideration of the quality of a thing ariſes the expreſsion; as every thing has expreſsion according to its quality. Generally ſuch is good as is beneficial and pleaſing to our ſenſes, and the reverſe is that which offends the eye and the intellect, and ſhows itſelf contrary to the ſame. All that which is not conformable to its cauſe and its deſtination, is ſuch as is contrary to its office, or of whoſe exiſtence one cannot comprehend the motive, and one knows not why this, or that form has offended the intellect. Alſo, that is offenſive to the eye which

diſtends too much its nerves and the leſſer parts; from whence it proceeds, that ſome colours, as well as the clare obſcure, when they are too much raiſed and too vivid, tire and fatigue, and the livid and too bright colours are diſguſting, becauſe they tranſport the eye with too great celerity from one ſentiment to the other, and produce by that an effort, and a precipitate extenſion of the nerves which gives pain to the eye. And from the ſame motive is harmony ſo pleaſing, ſince it always diſcovers things in the medium. It is neceſſary beſides to reflect, that from painting being compoſed of ſuch diverſity, there never has been a profeſſor, who has had a Taſte equally good in all its parts; but often in one part he has known how to chooſe well enough, and in another very indifferently; and in ſome without either ſkill or knowledge. This preciſion forms the diſtinction of Taſte among the moſt celebrated profeſſors, as I ſhall further explain.

CHAP. IV.

HOW TASTE AGREES WITH IMITATION.

IMITATION is the firſt part of Painting, and of courſe the moſt neceſſary, although not the

moſt beautiful. That which is neceſſary is never the moſt ornamented, nor the moſt elegant; becauſe neceſsity ſhows poverty, and ornaments are ſigns of abundance; and ſince painting, generally ſpeaking, is ſought after more for ornament than for neceſsity, and as every thing is eſteemed according as its firſt cauſe is good or bad, thus it is that we prefer in painting ornament to neceſsity. And for that reaſon are alſo more eſtimable thoſe Painters who have much invention, than thoſe who poſſeſs only mere Imitation. The Arts being therefore compoſed of both theſe parts, he will be the greateſt maſter who poſſeſſes both. Theſe two parts belong the one to the other, and unite in the following manner; that is, Idea, which is the parent of Taſte, is as the Soul whoſe imitation forms the body. This Soul, or Reaſon, ought to chooſe of all the ſpectacle of Nature, thoſe parts, which according to the human idea are the moſt beautiful; but ought not to create new parts which are not to be found in Nature; for by that, the Art would be enfeebled, and loſe as one might ſay, its body, and from whence its beauty would become obſcure to men. By this Idea I do not mean more than the good choice one makes of things natural, and not that of an invention of things new. If therefore a painting is done in ſuch a manner that it diſcovers the moſt beautiful parts of Nature, and that in each part appears natural truth, one ſhall perceive in the whole good Taſte, without prejudice of the part of Imitation.

Here it is neceſſary to make another reflection, which is of the difference between Taſte and Style. Taſte, as I have many times ſaid, conſiſts in choice; Style however is a kind of impoſition or fiction, and is of two kinds; that is, one which is produced by omitting many parts, and the other which creates and invents many new parts. There are many examples of the one and the other. Thoſe who have ſought greatneſs, have ſometimes omitted ſuch parts that the eſſential one of the object itſelf has remained changed and deſtroyed. Others, likewiſe, have wiſhed to meliorate, and correct the things of their choice, making the great, greater; and the little leſs, exceeding thus all Nature, as well in form and deſign, as in colouring and clare obſcure, and in all the parts of the Art. True Taſte, which neareſt arrives to perfection, is that which chooſes of the beſt and moſt uſeful parts of Nature, rejecting the uſeleſs, and conſerving the eſſential part of any thing. Then the whole is true and of the higheſt Taſte; for in ſuch a caſe Nature becomes meliorated, but not changed as happens in Style.

CHAP. V.

HISTORY OF TASTE.

SINCE all human things are imperfect, and of the good nothing remains but the will of choice; all the ſucceſs of our operations depends on choice, and the true grandeur of it; and he is truly great who knows the value of every thing, and of courſe diſtinguiſhes what is more or leſs great, and what is moſt eſtimable, ſo as to begin from that, and to apply the genius, and fix the deſires upon the execution of things worthy and great. In this mode of thinking and acting, the moſt celebrated and enlightened men of the Arts have diſtinguiſhed themſelves, even from the ancient Greeks to the preſent time. The greater part have known that which is moſt worthy in Nature, and upon which they have fixed all their ſtudy, and employed all their diligence and induſtry. The inferior geniuses, becauſe they are attached to mediocrity, believe that in this conſiſts all the Art; and the loweſt deſcription of artiſts remain enchanted at beholding the minutiæ of little works, taking them for principal things; inasmuch that human ignorance is become to paſs from the trifling to the uſeleſs, from the uſeleſs to the ugly, and from the ugly to the falſe and chimerical. The firſt of thoſe who poſſeſſed great Taſte were the Grecians;

I do not intend to ſpeak of the firſt inventors of the Art, but only of thoſe who have carried it to the higheſt degree of Beauty and good Taſte. They knew that the Arts were invented for men; that mankind love nothing ſo much as themſelves, and for that reaſon Man ought to be the moſt worthy object of the Arts, on which account they employed the greateſt diligence to that part of Nature. Man being of himſelf more worthy in his natural figure than when decorated with cloathing, they depicted, and formed him, in general naked, excepting only the female ſex, which decency and modeſty permitted not to appear in this ſtate. They conſidered man to be the work moſt worthy of Nature, for the commodiouſneſs and ſymmetry of his formation which is derived from his aſpect, and from the higheſt diſpoſition and ordination of his members; from whence they were the firſt to apply themſelves principally to proportion. They obſerved finally, that the ſtrength of man conſiſts in two principal motions, which are the retracting of his members towards the body which forms the centre, and of diſtending them from the body, or be it centre; and these obſervations opened them the way to the ſtudy of anatomy, and discovered to them the firſt ideas of ſignificance and expreſsion. Their cuſtoms and amuſements were very uſeful to ſuch obſervations. Their public diverſions gave birth to reflection, and from this reflection they arrived to know the cauſe of that which they ſaw. From hence they were elevated to their Deity, and

took from human nature thoſe parts which moſt agreed with the imaginary quality of their God; and in that manner they began their choice. They rejected at firſt, in forming theſe figurative Gods, all thoſe parts which characterize human weakneſs; from whence they made them of human figure, the moſt perfect in all nature, but not of human quality and defects. This is the derivation of Beauty. At laſt they found the degree of medium between the Deity and humanity; they united theſe two parts and thus invented the form of their Heroes. Then it was that the Art arrived to the moſt ſublime degree, becauſe by that union, divine and human, they came to the knowledge of all the proper ſignifications of the good and bad, in figure and in aſpect.

Beſides the end here mentioned, they had alſo occaſion, by means of their cuſtoms, to exerciſe themſelves in accidental things, ſuch as cloathing, drapery, animals, &c. but theſe parts were only eſteemed for that which they merited, ſince the Art remained only among the powerful and elevated geniuſes. So that, therefore, when vile geniuſes undertook the Art, and the judgment of works was not pronounced by wiſe men and philoſophers, but by the wealthy and great, the Art decayed by little and little, and at laſt degenerated to that trifling minutiæ above expreſſed; ſuch, that in thoſe times they produced things the moſt ſhocking, abſurd, and unjuſt. In ſuch manner, for inſtance, have they introduced groteſque, and other

works. Since that time the Art has no longer been ſubject to reaſon, but has been abandoned only to chance. If there were any rich perſon of good Taſte, he contented himſelf by encouraging ſome Artiſts to the imitation of thoſe, which even at that time they called ancients; and the beauty of their works were no longer guided by reaſon, but only by appearance. They worked after the manner of the ancients, without comprehending, or availing of their deſigns. The great difference which ariſes from that in works is, that things produced from pure imitation remain always unequal in themſelves, and it appears at times that one part is done by ſome great man, and the other by ſome ignorant perſon.

It is therefore neceſſary that Painters who are imitators, ſeek not only to imitate the work, but alſo the motive of its model. When there were ſucceſsively intelligent perſons in the Polite Arts, which happened under ſome Roman Emperors, one preſently beheld ſome lights, which however were extinguiſhed as ſoon as they were deprived of aliment. In this manner the Art, and its Taſte, have increaſed and diminiſhed till at laſt it has been almoſt deſtroyed, becauſe Artiſts have begun to work for want, after the manner of mechanics and journeymen. Thus the Art itſelf has fallen in diſcredit, not leſs among the learned and great men, but among all people, and has remained deprived of the means of raiſing itſelf, becauſe it was not founded on human neceſsity, as are the other Arts and Sciences;

being rather the mark of opulence and wiſdom than of neceſsity, and for that reaſon ought of courſe to have reſted in oblivion in thoſe barbarous ages, in which all the world, and principally Europe were inundated by wars, and in which men occupied themſelves chiefly in devaſtation and reciprocal oppreſsions.

When finally the world awakened from that horrible lethargy, and began to replace itſelf in the appearance of good order, the arts alſo revived, as one may ſay, from their ſtate of extinction. Some Artiſts, the miſerable remains of oppreſſed Greece, who only had a tincture of Painting, becauſe the images were in uſe in the Catholic church, brought the Art into Italy, but ſo deformed and imperfect, that one diſtinguiſhes in it only the good will or deſire of painting; and their poverty, followed by diſregard, did not permit them to advance it.

When Painting began to meet with the genius of the Italians, who were then rich and powerful, it was raiſed in ſome degree from darkneſs by different men of genius, among whom is principally diſtinguiſhed Giotto. But ſince choice cannot precede knowledge, thus it is that all thoſe who were before Raphael, Correggio, and Titian, ſought only pure imitation; and thus in that time there was no Taſte, and a Painting was in a certain manner a chaos. Some wiſhed to imitate nature, and could not; others who were able to imitate it, did not; but only choſe without knowing how they had choſen. Laſtly, in the time of the three great luminaries

of Painting, which is of the ſaid Raphael, Correggio, and Titian, painting as well as ſculpture became exalted, but with choice, and from that choice was produced the Taſte of the Art. Art being therefore an imitation of all Nature, it is too extenſive for the human underſtanding, and will be always imperfect among men. Such were the Painters before the time of theſe great men of whom we ſpeak; they choſe imperfectly, and rejected from ignorance, one part or another eſſential. But theſe three maſters coming to the world, choſe each a part peculiar, to beſtow upon that all his application, and if we may ſo ſay, to make all the Art conſiſt in that part.

Raphael choſe expreſsion, which he found in compoſition and deſign; Correggio ſought the pleaſing part, which he found in certain forms, principally, however, in clare obſcure; and, laſtly, Titian embraced the appearance of truth, which he found in the higheſt degree of colouring. The greateſt was naturally he who poſſeſſed the part moſt important, and expreſsion being no doubt the moſt uſeful, and the moſt important part of Painting, Raphael undoubtedly is the greateſt of the three. After him follows Correggio, becauſe to delight is the ſecond important part of Painting; and ſince truth is rather a duty than an ornament, Titian is only the third of the order; but all the three are great, becauſe each were in poſſeſsion of a principal part of Painting. All thoſe who have come after them have had only a portion of that re-

ſpective part which they poſſeſſed; from whence their taſte remained inferior. The ideal part being therefore the firſt and the greateſt part of all the Art, the ancient Grecians have been greater than all the reſt, becauſe the choice of their taſte comprehended all the ſenſible perfections.

Thus, according to my opinion, they arrived to ſuch a degree of perfection, firſt, becauſe they did not attempt to cultivate a field too extenſive, ſo that they could with a talent equal to that of the moderns, riſe higher than them, and approach, as we may ſay, nearer to the centre of perfection. Secondly, becauſe among them ignorant people did not judge of their works, as often happens among us, but this judgment was reſerved for learned men and philoſophers, as I have already ſaid in another place. Then, as a wiſe man always judges of the works of another with moderation and diſcretion, to the contrary the fooliſh and ignorant ſeek only to ſlander and depreciate, and make only paſtime at another's prejudice. The ancients, for that reaſon, ſeeking more than us true perfection, took a ſeparate part of the Art; they began by the moſt neceſſary, and endeavoured rather to perfectionate that, than to undertake much and to remain imperfect. We, to the contrary, content ourſelves in appearing perfect to the eyes of the ſimple and ignorant, whoſe money more delights than all the applauſes of wiſdom which beſtows not money; and the ſtudy of pleaſing the amateurs prevails over reaſon, and the rules

of the Art. We are indebted for beauty in the Arts to theſe people, among whom not riches, but reaſon and wiſdom determined the greatneſs and eſteem of a man, where a philoſopher was called the greateſt man of the city, and a learned man of the Arts was diſtinguiſhed as a philoſopher. In ſuch countries and nations, the Arts arrive to greatneſs; but it will be difficult in our time for them to return to that degree of elevation. However if any Artiſts of the preſent time, would wiſh, notwithſtanding the univerſal evil, to ſeek good taſte in Painting, I will adviſe him what ways and means he ſhould purſue, otherwiſe than which, it appears to me impoſsible that he can arrive, at this time, to that perfection of the Art.

CHAP. VI.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PAINTERS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A GOOD TASTE.

THERE are two ways by which good Taſte can be attained, when reaſon is our guide. The one which is the moſt difficult, is that of chooſing from nature itſelf what is moſt uſeful and

beautiful; the other more eaſy, is to learn from works in which the choice is already made.

For the firſt, the ancients are arrived at perfection; that is to ſay, in beauty, and in good taſte. The major part of the moderns, therefore, after the three aforeſaid great luminaries Raphael, &c. have attained it by ſecondary means.

The three cited great men have built not only the firſt foundation, but alſo another in medium, between nature and imitation.

The difficulty of obtaining a good Taſte by following nature is great, becauſe there ought to be a diſcernment, and what is called ſpiritual philoſophy to diſtinguiſh among the complex things of Nature, the good, the better, and the beſt.

In imitation it is more eaſy to make ſuch a diſtinction, ſince one knows and comprehends the works of men more eaſily than thoſe of nature. To arrive therefore to the true manner of imitation, it requires not to make an abuſe of it, and to ſtudy well the works of great maſters, as much as they have ſtudied nature, otherwiſe one might ever remain ſuperficial and never comprehend well their beauties. Since infants in their tender years ought to be fed after the manner which agrees with the weakneſs of their digeſtion, until by increaſe of age the fibres become capable of ſuſtaining food more groſs and ſubſtantial; thus ought alſo to proceed the weakneſs of intellect in a youth who is a beginner in the Art. One muſt not give him directly great

undertakings, that is to say, to accustom him in the beginning to difficult things, and great ideas; for by such his understanding would become erroneous, and confounded; besides it would give him presumption and pride, the young beginners being often carried away by the vanity of thinking they know all that which their masters would teach them. A pupil in the beginning ought therefore to be fed with the most pure and simple aliment of the art; that is, he should be given the most perfect works of the most celebrated professors; which as they are to be judged and distinguished we shall show hereafter.

The principal importance is, that he never sees nor much less imitates in the beginning ugly and imperfect works. He ought only to imitate the beautiful, and to imitate it exactly without entering into the cause of its beauty. By this method he will acquire a precision and justness of the eye, which is the instrument and most necessary requisite of all the Art. When he is arrived to that point, he will begin to reflect with wisdom and discernment on the works of great professors, searching diligently their ideas and motives; which he will do in the following manner: for example, he will review all the works of Raphael, Correggio, and Titian, examining whatever he finds beautiful in each painting; and when he sees in the works of each of them some parts and things always well executed and perfected, it will be a proof that such parts have been the principal object

and choice of that profeſſor. The other parts which he ſees executed and perfected in an inferior degree, will ſhow, that thoſe parts have not been their principal object; therefore one ought not to look for Taſte or the cauſe of Beauty in them. There are therefore in painting two principal parts which denote Beauty, which are Form and Colour, and to the firſt alſo belongs the clare obſcure.

By the Form one divines all the expreſsions of the different human paſsions, and with Colour all the quality of things; that is, the hard and ſoft, the humid and dry, &c. Raphael poſſeſſed expreſsion in the moſt perfect degree, which is the cauſe of the beauty of his works; and which is to be found in the whole, as well in the moſt beautiful as the inferior.

He has alſo coloured his clare obſcure ſometimes well enough, and at other times very competently; but this kind of Beauty appears not in his works as ſtudied, but only by way of imitation of Nature; for which reaſon it is only neceſſary to ſeek and learn from him the part of expreſsion. Expreſsion is perfect, if for inſtance, in an hiſtorical painting, a man choleric, jocoſe, melancholy, or of other ſuch paſsions, is repreſented with ſuch reſpectively, and which are expreſſed in that proportion and meaſure which the ſubject it repreſents requires; ſo that one may know the hiſtory from the figures, without being compelled to explain the hiſtory of thoſe figures. If in the ſame manner one reviews the works of Correggio, one

ſhall obſerve much more attraction than in any other painter.

It is neceſſary therefore to know in what conſiſts this attraction. Painting becomes attractive by means of the eyes, and theſe find their pleaſure in repoſe. To procure them therefore this repoſe, and that attraction, nothing in painting is better adapted than clare obſcure and harmony. Theſe requiſites form the principal part of Correggio. If one obſerves all his works one finds in the whole theſe parts. In the mean time that he ſeeks to repoſe and pleaſe the eye, he finds alſo grandeur of features, and becauſe all little parts are more faſtidious to the eye than thoſe which are great, this therefore is the cauſe of his Beauty. Titian laſtly ſought truth, but not after the ſame manner of Raphael. He repreſented man entire, and principally the mind, the ſentiments, and the paſsions. Titian ſought truth only in matter, as well in man as in any other thing; therefore he applied himſelf to expreſs the being and quality of things with thoſe colours which were adapted to them, and he ſucceeded wonderfully. In his works, every thing has thoſe colours which it properly ought to have. The fleſh which he painted, appears to have blood, fat, humidity, muſcles and veins; by which he produced that great appearance of truth. This is therefore the part one ought to ſtudy in him, and which will be found in all his works, as well in the moſt perfect as in the inferior.

Theſe are the cauſes of the effects, and of the

beauties of these three great men; and by this same method one ought to seek Beauty and the causes of it in any other great painter. I have shown what is that method, when I have said that one must study, or observe what is constantly found in the works of a master. In this manner one becomes capable of comprehending the motives which arises from their natural sentiments; and now I shall explain how we have been able to form of these sentiments a proper Taste. It is necessary to know that these three men were learned, and possessed a kind of philosophical understanding, as I have already said upon another occasion; from which they comprehended that man could not be perfect in all his parts, for which reason they chose each of them, those separate parts in which they believed consisted the greatest perfection, and by which they could move and please first themselves, and next other people. All the three therefore have the same end in view, which is to please, and to move; but no one can succeed in this intent in material works, if he does not show the cause of this pleasure, and that this effect had been produced in himself by a similar cause in Nature. This is exactly the case with the aforesaid professors. They expressed that which they felt; and as each of them took a part peculiar to himself, and different from the others, from this arises the propriety of their respective genius's It was necessary that Raphael should have had moderate passions and an ardent spirit, which produced in

him ideas full of expreſsion, and made him find pleaſure in all that which had much ſignificance. In Correggio, one finds a ſpirit mild and ſoft, which gave him an averſion to all that which is too powerful and expreſsive; and made him chooſe only ſuch parts as were pleaſing and tender. Titian laſtly had leſs ſpirit than even thoſe two, and more of materiality; ſo that he felt and choſe only the parts of Nature. Raphael for that reaſon always remained the firſt of the three.

I have ſaid in the beginning, that Taſte ariſes from knowing how to chooſe ſome parts, and to reject others which have not their neceſſary quality; and in this, Taſte in the Arts is like that of the palate, becauſe we call ſweet, ſour, bitter, &c. thoſe things which have no other flavour, and in which the ſame is found predominant: alſo in the Arts, a work is ſaid to be pleaſing, true, ſignificant, &c. always when theſe qualities are not embarraſſed and confuſed, but that one of them predominates, and all that which is uſeleſs be therein rejected.

Thus Raphael in the invention of his works, began directly by an expreſsion of ſtyle, which never moves any member when it was not abſolutely neceſſary for aſsiſting that expreſsion. To the contrary, he never gave to any figure or member a ſtroke of the pencil without ſome motive, which ſerved the principal expreſsion. Of the formation of man even to the leaſt movement, all ſerve in the works of Raphael as a principal motive; from whence having re-

jected all that which has no expreſsion, his works are full of expreſsive Taſte. The cauſe therefore by which the works of Raphael do not pleaſe all people equally at firſt ſight, is, that their beauties are founded on reaſon, and not ſolely in appearance; ſo that they are not felt at firſt ſight, but only when they have penetrated into the imagination, and many perſons are of a penetration ſo feeble, that they do not perceive any thing of the Beauty of that great Painter.

Since Raphael's principal object was expreſſion, thus he has given to each figure a different expreſsion and ſignificance, according as the hiſtory of his Painting required; and poſſeſsing this expreſsion in all the parts of Painting, this has become his natural and peculiar Taſte. In the ſame manner, that is, in leaving and rejecting all that which is uſeleſs, and ſerve not the principal object, Correggio has acquired a grateful and pleaſing Taſte, and Titian that of truth.

In order not to leave any obſcurity in this little work, I ſhall now proceed to explain even more diffuſely the Taſte of theſe three celebrated men, by examining and explaining it by all the parts of Painting ſuch as I have found in their works, and in every part thereof. I ſhall begin by Deſign, paſsing from thence to the clare obſcure, Colouring, Compoſition, Drapery and Harmony, in order thus to confirm what I have already ſaid of their Taſte.

PART THE THIRD.

EXAMPLES OF TASTE.

CHAP. I.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE DESIGN OF RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN; AND UPON THEIR INTENTIONS IN THE CHOICE OF THE SAME.

RAPHAEL has not been always alike. He began alſo in the alphabet of the Art before he was able to expreſs his ideas. He had however the happineſs to be born in the time of true innocence, and in the infancy of the Art; from whence he learnt in the beginning to imitate only pure truth; and this in time accuſtomed him to great exactneſs of the eye; which ſerved him as a baſis and foundation for the magnificent edifice of his profeſsion.

Until that moment, he did not know what it was to make a choice; but when he ſaw at Florence the works of Leonardo da Vinci, and of Michael Angelo, it awakened his great ſpirit, and his ardent mind was urged to think of more than ſimple imitation. Theſe works had notwithſtanding a kind of choice and grandeur; but in themſelves they were not ſufficiently beautiful to ſerve our Raphael as a guide to the choice of a good Taſte; becauſe a thing which is intended to communicate itſelf to others, and to ſerve as a true model, ought to be not only juſt but perfectly beautiful. On this account he therefore remained for ſome time in a kind of obſcurity, and advanced himſelf only by ſlow ſteps; but when at laſt he ſaw in Rome the works of the ancients, then he found his proper genius to inflame him. He had formed as a baſis the juſtneſs of the eye, from whence he did not find it difficult to imitate the ancients in the ſame manner as he had imitated Nature; but with all that, he never left the cuſtom of following always Nature, and learnt only of the ancients to make a good choice of the ſame. He found, that they had not generally followed it in its minutiæ; but had choſen only the neceſſary and beautiful parts, and rejected the ſuperfluous; from whence he found conſiſted one of the beauties of the ancients in their deſigns, and from this he firſt meliorated the Art in that point. He comprehended, nevertheleſs, that in the admirable conſtruction of the human body, the articulation of the bones and members formed

their agility, and that the ancients had made it their greateſt ſtudy and care; and in that as well as every other thing, he did not content himſelf, as many other great Painters have done, by the external imitation of the ancients, but he ſtudied and examined the cauſe of their Beauty. I do not doubt nevertheleſs that if Raphael had had the occaſion to form only ideal figures, he would ſtill have accuſtomed himſelf more to the beſt works of antiquity. But ſince the cuſtoms of his time were very different from thoſe of the ancient Grecians, and great ideas were already converted into low and baſe ones; he with a genius naturally elevated, found nothing in the uſages of his time that would content him except Expreſsion. This he found in part in the ancients, but more in the cognition of Nature; from them he contented himſelf to take the principal forms, and very often choſe from Nature that which they neareſt approached; then led on by his great genius, he advanced to examine the expreſsion of each ſeparate form, from which he found that certain lineaments of aſpect carry in themſelves alſo certain expreſsions, and are natural to certain temperaments; as alſo, that to a certain face appertain ſuch and ſuch members, hands, feet, &c. and theſe he united with the greateſt exactneſs, making the aſpect thus uniform with the movements and figure. Then when he proceeded to the exerciſe of deſigning, he thought always anew upon the principal motive; firſt of the meaſure and primary form;

from thence of the arrangement of the bones, and the articulation, to the principal muſcles and nerves, and laſtly to the ſmall veins, and even to the wrinkles where they occurred. One ſees therefore the principal parts always diſtinct, and raiſed in his works, and if he failed in any thing in his deſign, it was certainly only in the leaſt and accidental parts.

His inferior works alſo are teſtimonies of the perſpicuity of his genius, becauſe if he only ſketched any thing, it immediately ſhewed ſigns of a principal and important object; and that which was wanting was always very trifling in compariſon to that which exiſted: the neceſſary part was never wanting, but the ſuperfluous always. He is expreſsive even in his trifling pieces; his fleſh is round, his nerves ſtraight, the bone angular, and every thing is more or leſs according to its proper quality; and, in a word, all is truth in his works.

That which has been here ſaid, will be ſufficient for him who would wiſh to think for himſelf upon the ſubject of the deſign of Raphael. I ſhall therefore in this place treat of the deſign of Correggio.

Correggio was born eleven years after Raphael, when the art was found in the ſame ſtate of ſimplicity.

He began to ſtudy almoſt only the imitation of Nature, and ſince he purſued more a grateful and pleaſing genius, than a perfect one, he found out the way at the beginning, by means of uniformity, and depriving his drawing of every

angular and acute part. When he advanced in the art he was convinced by the clare obſcure, that grandeur adds much to the pleaſing parts; then he began to relinquiſh the minutiæ and to aggrandize the form, by imitating entirely the angles, and thus he produced a kind of ſublime Taſte even in deſign, which was not always conformable to truth. He drew his outlines in a ſerpentine manner. In general his deſign was not too juſt, but great, and pleaſing. One ought not to depreciate the ſtudious Painter, but it is neceſſary alſo to try to cull the honey from thoſe flowers, that is to ſay to avail of thoſe beauties which are to be found in nature, wherever the circumſtance and quality of things permit it. When Correggio has ſometimes deſigned any part of a beautiful object, he has joined the beautiful by way of imitation: This will be ſufficient to give an idea of the deſign of that Painter.

Titian was his contemporary. He has no part of deſign except that of Nature, which he imitated well, always when he found it beautiful; ſince he poſſeſſed a great juſtneſs of the eye, which was as one might ſay natural to all the Painters of that time; and if all had known how to make their choice as well as Raphael, all would have been like him perfect in deſigning. Since I do not find it neceſſary to ſay more upon the deſign of Titian, I will proceed to give reflections upon the clare obſcure of theſe three Profeſſors.

CHAP. II.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE CLARE OBSCURE OF RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN.

RAPHAEL had not in the beginning the leaſt idea of clare obſcure, and ſought only to imitate Nature. Since therefore ſimple imitation without choice cannot produce beautiful things, his works were in this part without beauty. Afterwards, when he went to Florence, and ſaw the works of thoſe Profeſſors, then he found out that there was a certain greatneſs in clare obſcure, and profiting by the acquaintance of Friar Bartholomy of Saint Mark, and of the works of Maſacci, he found that he ought not to place great folds of drapery in a piece, or any other heavy thing which would take from its effect. He began thus no longer to work without diſtinction of nature; he ſearched that part which is called MASS, and he united his light in the place moſt elevated, as well in the dreſſed figures as in thoſe naked. In this manner there appeared in his works ſuch a clearneſs, that although at a diſtance one could eaſily comprehend and diſtinguiſh any of his figures; which is a moſt uſeful and neceſſary part in the Art of Painting. Then when he ſaw in Rome the

works of the ancients, he was confirmed ſtill more in that taſte, and by imitation of the ſame he acquired a great diſcernment in the rotundity of all the parts, which knowledge only at the laſt he had arrived to. He has certainly made ſometimes MASSES of painting, but ſince his principal aim was always directed to expreſsion and truth, he contented himſelf with that part of clare obſcure which comes from imitation and not from idea. It was his cuſtom to place the greateſt clare obſcure upon the front figures, as if all the drapery and things ſimilar were of the ſame colour. He forced the clare of his front figures even to a white, and all the obſcure to almoſt a black; and this cuſtom he derived from the habit of painting always his hiſtories upon ſmall models, making few ſketches, by which he diſcovered in his figures ſuch light and ſhade as if they were all done and ſhadowed upon the ſtatues, that is to ſay, the nearer they were to the eye, the more they would be raiſed in the clare obſcure; and the greater diſtance they were from the ſight the flatter they appeared. The greateſt maſters in clare obſcure are not found thus; and in which it is better not always to imitate Raphael, but rather Correggio.

Correggio produced his works at firſt ſolely from Nature, but ſince he was of a ſenſibility ſo delicate, he could not ſuffer the harſhneſs of his maſters. He began firſt to relinquiſh the little internal parts, and to make each more flexible and tender; but he found himſelf always conſtrained by the ſteril form of ſimple nature to

place the clear colours ſo near the obſcure that theſe frequent variations were offenſive to the ſight. For that reaſon he dedicated himſelf to ſearch with all his delicacy more profoundly in nature, and he knew that all that which is great is rendered pleaſing to the eye by that tranquillity and ſweet commotion which ariſes from the ſame; for which reaſon he began to aggrandize his principal figures.

He ſaw nevertheleſs that in wiſhing to imitate nature, the too clear colours conſtrained him from loading his paintings with many things; from which he ſtudied and renewed the mode of uſing leſs clare than his maſters had uſed. He placed the body in ſuch a manner that only one part became illuminated, from whence almoſt only the half of a figure became clare and the other half obſure; but ſince obſcurity has almoſt always an ungraceful appearance, thus he found that the reflection of light would be well adapted to render a painting pleaſing. From this began to diſcontinue all his obſcurity, and thus with a little clare and various reverberations, he arrived to obtain much of greatneſs, and to avoid the trifling, much of brightneſs, and nothing dazzling: he obtained, in ſhort, the moſt beautiful appearance. As he knew that all things, and eſpecially colours, from the greater or leſs impreſsion of light and ſhade, became more or leſs beautiful, for that reaſon he never deſtroyed the clearneſs of their body, even in obſcurity, except in caſe of abſolute neceſsity; and by theſe means he produced the ſame clearneſs of

Raphael with much more ſweetneſs, and his works appear ſo much the more powerful as they are ſeen from a farther diſtance. At firſt, before he arrived to the perfection of his Taſte, there remained in the extremities of his clare ſomething curtailed; an effect which one obſerves even in Nature itſelf, when the light takes it latterally, and is very powerful; but finally, he arrived to that point which gives to all things the moſt perfect elegance and beauty. He did not ſucceed in all his works like Raphael, but he placed the light and ſhade in that part where he found it had the beſt effect. If the clare came of itſelf in that part where he deſired, he there placed it, otherwiſe he put in that place ſome lucid or opaque matter, ſuch as fleſh, drapery, or any other thing ſimilar, in a manner that it could arrive to that aſpect which he deſired; and thus he invented a kind of ideal Beauty in the clare obſcure. Beſides that, he produced alſo a kind of harmony in the clare obſcure, by diſpoſing and diſtributing his lights ſo, that the moſt powerful of them, as well as the greateſt of the obſcure ſhould appear only in one ſituation of the Painting. By his aforeſaid delicate ſenſibility, he comprehended beſides, that the violent contrapoſitions of light and ſhade, produced always a kind of roughneſs; for that reaſon he did not put black by the ſide of white, as many other profeſſors have done, who in appearance like him, have ſought Beauty in clare obſcure; but he gradually made his variations of colours, placing after white, not directly a black, but an aſh

colour, and after a black a dark grey, and thus his works always remained ſoft and natural. He always avoided to place together equal maſſes of clare and obſcure, and where he found a ſituation for powerful light and ſhade, he did not join another ſimilar, but placed in the interval a large piece of half tint, by which he conducted the eye to a kind of repoſe. With ſuch continued variation, he became capable of amuſing the eye of the ſpectator, by an uninterrupted and grateful motion; and as one never tires to behold a work, in which is found always new objects of delight, for that reaſon Correggio is eſteemed as the greateſt maſter of that kind. The part of clare obſcure in Painting, is more neceſſary than is generally believed; this is diſtinguiſhed and comprehended, not leſs by the ignorant than by the intelligent and wiſe; but Deſign is known only to the laſt. When the clare obſcure is diſpoſed in a work in ſuch a manner, and with ſuch perfection as by Correggio, this only is ſufficient to render it worthy of every applauſe and eſteem. I adviſe therefore all Painters to obſerve Correggio attentively, and to imitate him if they can.

Titian, who likewiſe took for his baſis the imitation of Nature, did not poſſeſs much choice in clare obſcure; and if in his works are ſometimes found Beauty of this kind, it is not derived from the ſtudy of it, but rather the effect of his colouring; becauſe in the mean time that he ſought to imitate Nature in that, he ſaw that it would be impoſsible to follow it

without having regard to its degree of light; from whence he found, that a ſky to appear natural, ought to be painted of a light colour, ſuch being the colour of the ſky; that the earth ought to be leſs clear than the ſky, and even leſs than the fleſh. Such reflections conducted him ſometimes to a kind of Beauty in the clare obſcure, but this is as I have ſaid an effect of the quality of his colouring. Having ſought the imitation of Nature in the higheſt degree, one cannot ſay that he has been ignorant of the part of clare obſcure.

In fact, I have no intention to ſay, that he was wanting in that part, but only that it was not the cauſe of his Beauty; that the part peculiar to him was colouring; and thatthere often appeared a roughneſs, and generally a vulgarity in his clare obſcure, principally when he ſought the contrapoſition; from which one eaſily ſees that he did not apply the greateſt diligence to that part, contented himſelf with as much of it only as is neceſſary to expreſs the quality of things. We ſhall now proceed to treat of the colouring of theſe three profeſſors.

CHAP. III.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE COLOURING OF RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN.

HAVING once began the examination of theſe three famous Painters, by nominating Raphael the firſt; I ſhall proceed alſo by the ſame method in this part, notwithſtanding he has generally been held in this rather as the laſt of the three. Raphael learnt Painting in the beginning, by water colours, according to the cuſtom of his time; and that ſtyle of colouring being more difficult than the others, he retained, like his maſters, a crude taſte in colouring. He arrived then to paint in freſco, in which one cannot make much uſe of Nature, being obliged to work in great meaſure from invention. Thus he formed a kind of habit which removed him very diſtant from the delicacy of Nature. From Father Bartholomy of Florence he obtained the uſe of a principal and good gradation of colours, which alſo remained peculiar to him, and ſince at the ſame time he learnt to paint very well in oil, he improved and carried alſo his Painting in freſco to a tolerable degree of taſte, but that notwithſtanding in compariſon to the other two maſters, remained always rough and ordinary in the colouring. I

do not for that reaſon treat much of him in this particular; ſufficient to ſay, that one ought not in this part to take the Paintings of Raphael for a model, but rather thoſe of Titian.

Correggio began by Painting in oil, and that being moſt adapted to a certain delicacy, he ſoon caught the ſtyle which gives ſuch force to his Paintings. By way of clare obſcure, he ſaw that colours which are not forcible and tranſparent, cannot expreſs true ſhade; therefore he choſe tranſparent colours, and a kind of veil, to make that appear truly obſcure which ought ſo to be.

The cauſe why true colours, which are not forcible, cannot form a true ſhade, is, becauſe the rays of light reſt upon their ſurface, from whence they appear certainly obſcure, but at the ſame time illuminated; whereas forcible colours admit thoſe rays, and their ſurface remains therefore truly obſcure. He comprehended it therefore, to be ſo much the more neceſſary to impaſte well the clare, becauſe their body ought to be of ſuch a quality, that from the light of the day they could receive a greater clearneſs. From the knowledge that obſcure colours belong to darkneſs, and clear colours to light, he comprehended, that although all darkneſs is black, light, notwithſtanding it comes from the ſun, is not white, but rather inclined to yellow. And that all reflection ought to be of a colour equal to that body from which it is derived. From that he obtained in

his works the true knowledge of the three parts of light, ſhadow, and reflection.

Principally, in Correggio, the colours of ſhadowing are very excellent. By too much affection which he had for the clare obſcure, he made his lights too clear and pure; which makes the ſame appear always ſomewhat ordinary, and the fleſh not ſufficiently tranſparent. In this part Correggio added ſomething to Nature, and did rather that which the clare obſcure required, than that which is truly the property of matter.

Titian, who likewiſe began to paint in the age of imitation, and ſtudied alſo in oil colours, was ſoon led by his ſenſibility to the quality of things. Since he painted figures, as well as landſcapes from Nature, he acquired from that a true and eſſential knowledge; and the cuſtom of taking portraits ſerved him as the higheſt exerciſe, becauſe he was conſtrained to paint different particular and minute things, as alſo different drapery, and other things of grand, forcible, and vivid colours; ſo that he was obliged to ſtudy the method to accord and unite well all thoſe different things. And ſince he obſerved, that ſuch as is pleaſing in Nature, might eaſily have a bad effect in Painting, thus he endeavoured to imitate Nature to perfection. He comprehended, that in Nature are to be found alſo things of beautiful and vivid colours, but but that theſe become alſo eaſily deſtroyed by reflection, by the porouſneſs of their body, colour of light, and other ſuch things; as alſo that in all objects are found many half tints; and by

that he arrived to a great harmony in his compoſitions. Laſtly, he diſcovered, that in Nature, every thing has a different compoſition, and connection of tranſparency of repletion, of ſmoothneſs, &c. and that every thing has its tint and different ſecurity; from whence he ſought in the imitation of that diverſity, the perfection of the Art, and he found it alſo by a conſtant and continual imitation of Nature.

At laſt he took from each part the moſt of the whole, that is, he made entirely of half tint, that fleſh which had naturally much half tint, and he made almoſt entirely without ſuch tint that which had little; thus the red almoſt without tint, and the ſame in all the other colours, (but always imitating truth). From thence arriſes in his works the grand taſte of colouring, in a manner, that in that reſpect, he is the moſt excellent and trueſt model of imitation.

He found by the diſtinction of principal colours, alſo the principal maſs, ſuch as Raphael found in Deſign, and Correggio in clare obſcure.

CHAP. IV.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE COMPOSITION OF RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN.

WISHING to treat of Compoſition, or be it of the union of figures, I may juſtly begin with Raphael, and it is not neceſſary, that on this occaſion I ſhould make an excuſe, or juſtification, ſince that was his peculiar part. Raphael who was brought up near the truth, ſought it in himſelf, and found it united with expreſsion. He began with the greateſt innocence, and was in the beginning, cold, though true, until maturity of years diſcovered to him more lively impreſsions. His genius, which I have ſaid on another occaſion to be philoſophical, was moved only by that which has expreſsion. He felt more the virtues than the vices of human nature: (except, as it is ſaid, one only vice). He was made for truth, which could not elevate itſelf above him. He ſought the beſt in man, but could not entirely abandon humanity, with the happy ſucceſs of the ancient Grecian Painters. Their genius hovered between the heavens and the earth; but Raphael proceeded with ſublimity, and majeſty on earth alone. He received the firſt idea of figurative expreſsion, when he ſaw the works of Maſacci, and the cartons of Leonardo da Vinci.

According to them he considered Nature in all its essence, and principally the passions of the mind, and how these influence the body. When Raphael invented and composed any painting, he thought first of the whole of its significance, that is, of what it ought to represent; then in how many different attitudes man could be painted, and which would be the strongest, and which would be the lightest; which would be the proper to this, or to that man; how many and what men he could introduce in such a painting, and in what situation each ought to be arranged; that is, at what distance from the principal object, to express this or that sentiment; and thus he judged also if such painting would become large or small. If it were large, he thought what relation the principal history or expression of the principal group would have with the other figures; if the history were momentary, or of duration; if in this description it were sufficiently expressive; if any anterior action had relation with the present, or if to that followed quickly any other event; if it were a tranquil and simple story, or extraordinary violent, cheerful, or confused; tragically simple or tragically-confused.

After having thought of all these, he then chose of the most necessary, and accordingly that regulated his principal idea, which he conducted sufficiently clear and intelligible. Then he gradually arranged all the ideas according to their dignity, placing always the most necessary before those which were less so,

and from thence he deduced that if in such a work any thing was wanting, it was only the least important, and never the most beautiful or necessary. In other Painters to the contrary, one sees that very often is wanting the necessary part, and that they have studied grace only in the superfluous. When therefore he began to think of the particular figures, he did not apply himself, as many others have done, first to the beautiful attitude, and afterwards to consider if that figure were apt and proper to his history; but he reflected immediately in what situation man would be found if he were truly affected by the passions which were there represented; then he considered what sentiments man must first have had in that event, and lastly in what expressions they ought to be represented, and of what parts and members he had occasion to convey his idea. To these then he gave the greatest motion and action, by leaving dormant all the rest. From this it proceeds that in Raphael one often sees attitudes entirely simple and streight, which nevertheless appear to be as beautiful in their situation as those in the greatest motion; because a simple figure without action has perhaps an expression appertaining to the inward man, that is the soul; and the other of much action, ought to represent only an external motion. In this manner, Raphael reflected in every work, of each group, figure, member, and each part of a member, and even of the hair, and drapery, as I shall speak of in another place. He conveyed in his history the internal emotions. In

one of his ſpeaking figures one ſees alſo by the face if he ſpeaks with tranquility, reſentment, or with heat: in a thinking figure of his, one diſcovers what he thinks, and in all the paſsions which have great expreſsion, one ſees if it be the beginning, the middle, or end of that emotion. One could write an entire book reſpecting the expreſsion of Raphael. I know however, that the little which I have ſaid will be ſufficient for thoſe who know how to think for themſelves; and that it is alſo too much for thoſe who do not wiſh to take the pains to apply themſelves to that ſubject. I do not write for ſuch perſons, as I know they will not read, or cannot comprehend the ſpirit of theſe reflections. Nor can alſo the idle perſon complain of not having had the works of Raphael to ſtudy; ſince thoſe who know how to think, and have not the convenience of ſeeing him in the original, will find him in the Engravings of Mark Anthony, of Auguſtino Veneziano, and of others, who although ſomewhat feeble, are however always ſufficient for thoſe who have a deſire to learn; and thoſe who do not thus learn, would not even if they had before their eyes all the originals of Raphael, and all the beauties of Nature. Theſe are in that part condemned to ignorance. I conclude that Raphael has arrived to great Taſte in Expreſsion, by having rejected all the uſeleſs and inſignificant parts; and all that which he has placed in his works, he has choſen in ſuch a manner that it becomes as uſeful and neceſſary to the ſubject as meat and drink to an entertainment.

Correggio whoſe genius was formed from grace, could not endure things of ſuch expreſsion. The powerful, the ſad, the expreſsive in him, are like children's tears, which ſoon are converted into laughter; and his anger is like that of a beautiful miſtreſs. His genius always flowed in grateful and pleaſing ſentiments, and never ſlumbered, by reaſon of the ſenſible pleaſure which it experienced. In all things which he had to repreſent, one never finds any effort except that to pleaſe. The powerful ſtyle was to him an horror. He was the firſt who invented paintings with other objects beſides that of Truth; and none before him has ever taken the beauty of appearance as the principal view of a work in painting.

The narrow limits of his anteceſſors were for him too confined, and finding the grandeur of the parts of clare obſcure, he broke the boundaries of their ſwelling floods, and carried his ſpectators to a ſea of pleaſure. Thus his Graces, like attractive Syrens, have ſeduced ſome painters, and caſt them away on the ſhore of error; becauſe whoever imitates his figures without his ſentiments, will not find the good or the beautiful, either for themſelves or for others. Correggio began by imitating Nature and his maſters; but he did not continue a long time that mode. It was natural to him to evitate any limited thing. In his firſt idea it appears that he only thought of expoſing to the eye ſomething pleaſing. His inventions are formed only by way of ſentiment, and not by way of reflection. He ſought

to repreſent his figures in a manner that would ſhow a great maſs of clare obſcure, rather than expreſsion, the grateful excepted, which his ſenſibility often found. A painter will here conclude that Correggio poſſeſſed a graceful and pleaſing taſte, becauſe he always avoided thoſe things which were not of that deſcription; ſo that where this pleaſing part will have a good effect, there Correggio is to be imitated; but he is inimitable where one ſearches expreſsion. I adviſe therefore all painters not to ſtudy Correggio if they have not ſenſibility like him. When a painter, in the mean time that he invents, can transform himſelf, as one may ſay, into that which he would wiſh to imitate, he will imitate well; if he cannot, it will always be better to follow that which he feels of himſelf.

Titian had generally little ſenſibility, and invented rather according to the general rules in uſe, than by genius, from whence he is not to be followed in that part. He has ſometimes invented figures beautiful enough, but one may believe that it has happened more from chance than ſkill, ſince it is preſently by the ſide of one that is low and ordinary.

CHAP. V.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE DRAPERY OF RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN.

In ſpeaking of Drapery, it will appear another time, that I ſtudy to elogiſe Raphael. In the beginning he followed his maſters in this part, and improved himſelf much by means of the works of Maſacci, but ſtill more by means of thoſe of Father Bartholomy of St. Mark. Then, when he ſaw the works of the ancients, he abandoned entirely the ſchool of his maſters, and availed himſelf of the rules of bas-relief to diſpoſe naturally the drapery, and thus he acquired the beſt Taſte in his folds. He obſerved that the ancients had regarded the Drapery, not as a principal object, but as accidental; that they had dreſſed, but not hid the nudity of the figures, that theſe were covered, not with rags, but with true and uſeful linen; neither ſmall as a napkin, or large as a ſheet, but made according to the degree of ſize, and action of each figure. He ſaw that the ancients made the folds alſo large upon the largeſt parts of the human body, and that they did not diſcompoſe thoſe ſaid great parts with any thing minute; and when they were conſtrained to do it on account of the nature of the Drapery, they made the folds ſo little elevated, and ſo ſmall, that they could not ſignify a princi-

pal part. Upon ſuch examples alſo he made the drapery large, that is, without ſuperfluous folds, and placed his folding in the joints of the members, without ever taking by this from the effect of the figure. He regulated the form of the fold according to the naked form which was under. If the part or muſcle was large, he made alſo a large maſs, and where the parts were confined and abridged, he made alſo the ſame number of folds, though not ſo large. In his beſt time he obſerved that a member in a looſe drapery ought not to be expreſſed but in one part; but after that he ſometimes marked it at two parts in looſe folds. Where the drapery was free, that is, where nothing was under, he took great care to give to his folds the ſame ſize of a member, but he marked it by a large aperture and plait, or in a form entirely different from that of the member.

In his drapery he did not ſearch all the folds, in order to place in his work the moſt beautiful, but only to chooſe thoſe which were adapted to expreſs the nudity which was under. He made the form of theſe as different as are the muſcles of the human body: none were round or ſquare, becauſe the ſquare form is incompatible with folds, except where they are divided and form two triangles. He had likewiſe the folds of that part which was near, greater then of that part which was remote. To any guarded part he did not make the folds long, nor to a long part plaits ſhort and triangular. He made the fold and

aperture great only upon the empty, and he never placed two together of equal greatneſs; neither by way of clare obſcure in the elevation, or in the contours; nor alſo of equal form and force. His looſe drapery is admirably beautiful. One beholds in the ſame, that the general cauſe of their motion is the air. It is not like that of others, drawn or ſuſpended, but each fold is in contrapoſition with another only according to the liberty and nature of its quality. He diſcovered in ſome parts the edges of the drapery, to denote that his figures were not dreſſed in ſacks. All his folds have their motives, either by their proper weight, or by the action of the members. Sometimes one ſees in what poſition they were before they took that form, and one obſerves, that he even ſtudied expreſsion in that part. One ſees alſo by the fold of a leg or an arm, whether that motion was either before or behind. If ever a member was contracted, one could judge if it were before extended; if extended, one could likewiſe judge if it were before contracted. Alſo in the principal motion, he obſerved that always the drapery when it covers the half of the members, leaves the other half uncovered, paſsing obliquely, and making generally a triangular form. However, the triangular folds are natural, becauſe drapery being contracted at one ſide, extends at the other, and thus produces a triangular form. If then I have ſaid, that Raphael like the ancients, has regarded drapery as a thing accidental, by that one ought to underſtand, that he compre-

hended man and the motion of his members to be the ſole motive of the ſuſpenſion of the raymens with which he is covered, and of the variety of their folds; from whence he conducted the ſame to their cauſe, by regulating them according to that which they required, and believed it neceſſary to hide, and not to make appear in them any diligence in the choice: theſe reflections will be ſufficient of him, for whoever would wiſh to ſtudy his works, and to confront with them what I have here ſaid.

As Raphael directed every thing towards the Taſte of expreſsion; thus alſo Correggio had always in view in his drapery, that of pleaſing. He quickly abandoned the cuſtom of his predeceſſors, and ſince he painted moſtly upon ſmall models, which he dreſſed in rags, and even with papers, thus he ſtudied the maſs, and in this the gracefulneſs, rather than the juſtneſs of each plait; from whence it is that in this drapery, one ſees, although grand and airy, a bad folding.

When ſometimes he painted from Nature, he did not make a good choice in the folds, and often hid or deſtroyed with them, the naked figure. Otherwiſe he made them beautiful, or at leaſt of rich colours; and often alſo obſcure, in order to render the fleſh more lucid and clear.

As Titian was in all things worthy of imitation, he was therefore very excellent in drapery. He painted it ſufficiently beautiful, and with great truth, in colours clear and brilliant, and among

other things, he made the linen very gloſſy and clear, but the whole without choice of folds; for which reaſon he did not diſcover true Nature, and is not to be imitated in that part.

CHAP. VI.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE HARMONY OF RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO AND TITIAN.

We now proceed to the Harmony of theſe three great maſters; and here alſo, were it not to follow the order once eſtabliſhed, I ſhould be almoſt ſilent on the part of Raphael. As he never dedicated himſelf to any particular thought of pleaſing, but only to expreſsion, thus he did very little in that part; and if ſuch is to be found in his works, it is derived rather from the imitation of Nature, than from any particular knowledge.

Correggio to the contrary, is oppoſitely diſtinguiſhed. In the mean time that he ſought to pleaſe and could not endure too much brilliancy, he formed alſo Harmony the parent of pleaſure, and the offspring of a tender ſenſibility, nor conſiſts in any thing more than the art of finding a medium between two different things, as well in Deſign, as clare ob-

ſcure and colouring. From whence Correggio, as I have ſaid in the conſiderations upon Deſign, avoided all angles, and made all his contours ſerpentine. An angle is a conjunction of two ſtreight lines, and this was a thing inſufferable to our Correggio; on which account he gave them a curve, and in that manner made his contours harmonious. In the ſame manner he introduced the half of clare obſcure and colouring. Beſides that, he obſerved better than any other Painter, that the eyes after ſome effort require repoſe; for that reaſon, when he had placed in its ſituation any lively, beautiful, or very powerful colour; he then did a piece of half tint, before paſsing again to thoſe colours, which he did always gradually, and with leſs force in the beginning than at the end, in a manner, that the eye of the ſpectator is conducted as by different degrees, from one lively and ſplendid object to another; a paſſage grateful and pleaſing, like his who ſleeps and is awakened by the ſound of harmonious inſtruments.

When I ſay that Correggio has paſſed from the powerful to the tender, and from this to the medium, I intend to denote, that one can thus without obſtacle paſs quickly from fatigue to repoſe, but not, without faſtidiouſneſs, from repoſe to fatigue. One may alſo demand from what motive I have begun with the powerful, and not rather with the medium, which I have placed at the laſt: I reply, that it ought to be the conſideration of a Painter, to begin always

by the anterior part of a Painting, by paſsing from thence to that which is behind; or rather by the primary object, then turning from hand to hand towards the ſides; and ſince the powerful, the beautiful, and the important in Painting ought always to be found in front, or in the principal ſituation of the hiſtory; thus I have thought fit to begin with the powerful; and as the whole ſhould appear as done for the principal object, the Painter ought to give it the beſt appearance, and to embelliſh it only with the remains; from whence the primary object ought to contain expreſsion, and the others reſt: this Correggio obſerved in the perfection of his colouring, and clare obſcure; but in Deſign he made abuſe of harmony, and of pleaſing. However he it is to be excuſed, becauſe Deſign is not that part which he moſt required for harmony. We are however indebted to him for all that gracefulneſs and harmonioufneſs which Painting was deprived of before his time. He has the honour to be in that part, not only the inventor, but alſo in the execution he arrived to a higher degree than any other, nor has he ever yet been ſurpaſſed. In this reſpect he is by himſelf; nor is there him who can compare with him. I would ſpeak of him alone in this if I had not promiſed to treat of all the three profeſſors throughout the principal parts of the Art; for which reaſon it is neceſſary to ſay ſomething of Titian.

Titian poſſeſſed alſo a kind of Harmony, but it appeared in his works by way of imitation of

Nature. There is not in him as in Correggio, a graduate reflection of that part: however he is aſsiſted in uniformity, by the means of which he appears harmonious.

CHAP. VII.

COMPARISON OF THE TASTE OF THE ANCIENTS, AND THEIR INTENTIONS IN THE CHOICE OF IT; LIKEWISE THAT OF THE MODERNS.

Since every Painter has choſe ſome particular thing in the purſuit of perfection, thus alſo have the Ancients. Among all the Painters who have lived ſince the polite Arts have been almoſt found anew, one obſerves a univerſal cauſe, and one ſole inclination; that is to ſay, the imitation of Nature: this is the principal aim of all, with the ſole diſtinction, that they have ſought it by different ways. In the ſame manner alſo among ancient Grecian Painters, notwithſtanding their diverſity, there was one principal view, but much more ſublime than that of the moderns. Exalting their ideas even to the ſame perfection, they took the medium between the higheſt perfection, and humanity; that is to ſay, they

took true Beauty for their principal object, contenting themſelves to take from truth only Expreſsion: for that reaſon, Beauty is to be found in all their works. Among all the parts of expreſsion, none were ſo powerful as to predominate over Beauty.

I think, therefore, I am empowered to call the Taſte of the ancients that of Beauty and perfection; and ſince wine mixed with water preſerves always the flavour of wine, thus their works, although deteriorated by humanity, conſerve always the taſte of perfection, and for that reaſon are called perfect. The works of the ancients are in themſelves very different with regard to bounty and expreſsion, but not in Taſte. We have three principal claſſes of the ancient monuments of the Arts; that is to ſay, in all the ſtatues which have remained, are three different degrees of Beauty. The moſt inferior of theſe ſtatues have alſo in them great Taſte, but only in the parts of pure neceſsity; thoſe of the ſecond claſs, not only in the neceſſary parts, but alſo in the uſeful; and finally thoſe of the firſt and ſublime claſs, contain the neceſſary, uſeful, and even the ſuperfluous, and are therefore perfectly beautiful. Beauty being therefore in itſelf nothing more than the perfection of each idea, for that reaſon is called beautiful as much in the thing viſible as inviſible, that which is the moſt perfect; therefore it is neceſſary to view in the ſame manner, alſo the works of the ancients; that is, that their Beauty conſiſts not always in one, and the ſame

part, but that the chofen part be repreſented perfectly. The ſtatues of the moſt ſublime degree, are the Laocoon and the Torſo of Belvedere, and the Gladiator of Borgheſe. Of this third degree, there is not an infinity of number, and of the inferior degree it is not neceſſary to make mention. The great profeſſors among the ancients, were more ſublime in their ideas than what the moderns have been, and alſo in their execution they were more grand and more happy, becauſe their ideas were formed upon perfection, and in the execution they followed not one part as the moderns have done, but the whole of Nature. As the moderns have ſhown in one work, one only intention, thus, the ancients in each part, ſhow that diverſity of intention with which Nature has been formed. Among the moderns, Correggio loved the pleaſing ſtyle, and Raphael the expreſsive.

Then as in a muſcle, for example, the tendon is more expreſsive than the fleſh, which however is more pleaſing, therefore Raphael marked more the tendon than the fleſh, and Correggio more the fleſh than the tendon. The ancient Grecians however, knew how to unite the one and the other, ſince they knew that the tendons as well as the fleſh, have each their different beauties. The moderns have always ſought to diminiſh one part, in order to aggrandize the other: the Grecians did not do this, but only changed theſe parts according to their expreſsion. If the figure were human, they adapted to it all that which appertains to the

property and quality of man. If on the contrary it were divine, they abandoned the human quality, and ſought only divinity: thus they regulated themſelves according to the different ſignifications.

When they formed a man, they endeavoured not to leave out any thing, but to render at the ſame time more viſible that which is neceſſary to expreſsion, than that which is not neceſſary.

I conclude from all that I have ſaid, that the Painter who would wiſh to obtain a good, or be it the beſt Taſte, ought to learn from the ancients the TASTE OF BEAUTY, from Raphael the TASTE OF EXPRESSION, from Correggio that of PLEASING, AND OF HARMONY, and from Titian that of TRUTH AND OF COLOURING. All this therefore, he ought to ſeek in Nature, becauſe that which I have written or explained in this work, has only for object to make known to the beginners of the Art, the touchſtones on which they ought to prove and examine their own Taſte and that of others, in order not to deceive their judgment. As the models of which I have ſpoken, have been ſo many times imitated, without any having been able to ſurpaſs them, it is therefore a true evidence, that theſe three great maſters had taken the right road to perfection, and for that reaſon I have made uſe of them for example, and have ſhown the manner how to know and imitate them. He who will labour diligently, and reflect ſeri-

ouſly upon what I have ſaid, will find his day of profit, by following a good Taſte.*

* ANNOTATION BY D'AZARA.

Mengs said, and with truth, that the Ancients introduced in their compositions few figures, in order that their beauty should not be too comprehensible and manifest; and that the Moderns fill their Paintings as much as posssible, that one may less discern their defects. The Cortonian School, and the Neapolitan which has been formed after it (the two now reigning schools in Italy) have for rule in their compositions, to fill with figures and objects a great space, and to leave nothing of open field. They have no regard that nothing is insignificant, or that nothing confounds the composition; it is sufficient that the attitudes and the colours form a contrast, and have what they call an effect; thus, it is not expression or idea, but the space which they have filled that principally occupies their minds. I have seen green and blue faces in the paintings of Corrado, because he thought it would have a wonderful contrast with those of other colours.

As this is a new thing, they have likewise invented new terms, calling themselves Macchinisti, and they say that every one who composes coherently with the subject, and with only the necessary figures, without contortions, and without caricature, will be a cold, and inanimate painter, deprived of fire and talent. Lastly in that, as in other things, has prevailed a certain spirit over judgement, and Taste is therefore become corrupted.

It will aid this proposition to recount a passage of Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise upon painting, since it is well known that although that Author wrote when the Arts in Italy were yet in their infancy, yet he gives us to understand, that reason triumphs always when preocupation does not stifle it.

He says thus. " And certainly I blame those painters who by " wishing to appear copious, and because they do not wish that " any void should remain, for this reason do not follow any regu- " lar composition, but disperse the whole confusedly and disso- " lutely; from whence it appears that the history does not treat " of one action only, but makes a tumult; and therefore he who " principally wishes dignity in his history, should study unity. " So that as few words carry majesty in a prince, provided his " will and commandments be understood, thus in History, a small " number of bodies are sufficient to convey dignity, and if varied " to produce Grace. I hate unity in History, nevertheless I do not " praise more copiousness, which is far from dignity. Certainly " in History, that pleases me much, which I see observed by the " comic and tragic poets, who represent the fable with as few " personages as possible."

CHAP. VIII.

CONCLUSION.

I DESIRE not to be interpreted ſiniſtrouſly, but with due diſcretion, upon the judgment which I have formed on theſe three great men. When I have ſaid of them reſpectively that they did not poſſeſs this or that part, it ought to be underſtood in compariſon with the other parts of which they were in full poſſeſsion; or rather in proportion to others of theirs which abounded in ſuch parts.

In the ſame ſenſe ought to be underſtood the ſilence which I obſerve on the Beauties of many other great men, and the little eſteem with which I appear to ſpeak of them. Such is certainly not my intention; and ſuch like expreſſions ſerve me only to make my readers comprehend the difference there is in Genius's, although each may be beautiful in their kind. Every one knows well that no human operation is ſo egregious, that it cannot be carried to a higher degree. I conduct my readers to the cleareſt ſource that any painter can have taſted; its waters are the moſt pure and limpid, but this does not hinder that the quantity which ſcatters from its fall, and is gathered in vaſes, ſhould not be equally good to quench the thirſt. When I ſay that all the Painters after theſe

three have only poſſeſſed ſeparate parts of their reſpective perfections, I do not mean by that to depreciate the one, but only to praise and exalt in the higheſt degree the merits of the others. In the ſame manner when I criticiſe the colouring and harmony of Raphael, I do not mean that it is properly bad, but that it is not in compariſon with that of Correggio and Titian; ſince the ſame Raphael would be alſo in theſe parts ſufficiently beautiful when compared to Michael Angelo, Giulio Romano, or even with Caracci. As is alſo Correggio in deſign and drapery, becauſe when compared with Tintoretto in the one, or with Rubens or Giordano in the other, he will always remain excellent. And laſtly the clare obſcure of Titian is poor only when compared to that of Correggio, but becomes great when compared to that of others; and preciſely for that are theſe three the greateſt maſters; ſince they were great in all parts, and in ſome excellent, and incomparable. They had different taſtes, becauſe they choſe different objects. Raphael had the Taſte of Expreſsion, Correggio that of Pleaſing, and Titian that of Truth: each made his choice. As theſe three Painters generally ſought Truth; they have very often met, becauſe the whole, as well in expreſsion as in pleaſing, is found in Nature, and they form reſpectively a different taſte, only, becauſe they do not mix, as nature does, every thing together; but each choſe his particular part from the whole. Then, when by means of imitating nature, they ſometimes found one part

reſpectively proper to another, without being contrary to the principal object, they formed it beautiful although it was not their peculiar part. From whence it comes that Raphael has ſometimes painted as pleaſing as Correggio, and with as much truth as Titian. Correggio ſometimes almoſt as well as Raphael, and as true as Titian; and by turns Titian has deſigned like Raphael and pleaſed like Correggio. This being therefore in the works of all the three an event rather rare, I have thought it well to determine their Taſte in conformity to their principal parts.

OBSERVATIONS

OF THE CHEVALIER

DON JOSEPH NICHOLAS D'AZARA

ON

THE TREATISE UPON BEAUTY

BY

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS.

OBSERVATIONS

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MENGS compoſed this Treatiſe before he went to Spain, and this was his firſt literary production, which was printed in German, the language in which it was written; and ſince Beauty was his favourite object through life, he continued to meditate upon it always, as we ſhall ſee by his following works.

In theory and in practice no one has ever known how to diſcern and to expreſs Beauty better than Mengs, but in the theory he had adopted the opinions of the Platonians upon the origin of that ſublime quality, perſuaded by the metaphyſics of his friend Winkelman. My ideas have always been very different from thoſe of theſe two friends, and I have thought of ex-

preſsing them apart, ſo that the Reader, confronting the different opinions, can conceive better the object of which we treat. It neither adds or takes from Beauty to diſcourſe differently upon its origin: this does not take from it that which it really is.

To form theſe my obſervations I have always profited of the works of Mengs, and what I have drawn from his converſation during many years of the moſt intimate and intrinſic friendſhip, for which reaſon I proteſt ingenuouſly, that whatever might be found valuable in theſe diſcourſes, is all from Mengs; and the worthleſs parts will be aſſuredly mine.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

CHAP. I.

OF THE VARIOUS OPINIONS UPON BEAUTY.

AN infinite number of people have written upon Beauty, and yet I believe we are very far from knowing what it really is. Plato who treats largely upon it, gives it but little explanation, and his Dialogue HIPPIAS designed to explain what beauty is, appears rather to have been written to prove what it is not. In other places he inclines to give a real existence to that quality, as he gives generally to all his ideas. The Graces, the Muses, and all the train of Grecian poetry have the same origin and the same existence. The system of the same Plato is still more ingenious as marked by Mengs, which is, that our souls had their being before they were united to the body, and that then they had known all things: that matter had absorbed that science; and that when we learn, we only remember that which we knew in our first state: and since we then knew positive Beauty, we now remember it when it is revised in ma-

terial objects. Pity that a syſtem ſo ingenious be not true!

Saint Auſtin who was ſo Platonic, was ſaid to be the author of a treatiſe upon Beauty which is loſt. One diſcovers, notwithſtanding, by what he has ſaid in other works, that he believed it a correſpondence of parts with the whole to form a unity. OMNIS PORRO PULCHRITUDINIS FORMA UNITAS EST. Thoſe who are initiated in the myſtery of numbers, will underſtand perhaps what this ſignifies.

Wolf and the Leibnitians, who have not always known how to dream with the charms of the Platonians, ſay, that the beautiful is all that which pleaſes, and that which diſpleaſes is ugly. One cannot confound more groſsly the cauſe with the effect, than by confounding the beautiful with the pleaſing.

Others pretend, that Beauty conſiſts in VARIETY, UNITY, ORDER and PROPORTION. This is to pretend to explain one abſtracted thing by another ſtill more ſo; for ſince Beauty is difficult to comprehend, not leſs ſo, is REGULARITY, ORDER, &c.

The ſyſtem of Hutchinſon and of his followers, who have imagined an internal ſentiment, by which they believe we diſcover Beauty as the eye diſcovers colours, appears to me the pooreſt, and the leaſt ingenious ſyſtem of the whole. It reſembles the reſearch of thoſe little poets, who not knowing how to raiſe naturally the intricacies of a Tragedy, have recourſe to miracle. According to the rules of theſe philoſophers, it is

neceſſary to create as many internal ſentiments as there are abſtracted ideas which enter into the brain. Virtue, Juſtice, Order, &c. have their particular organs, by which they are introduced into the ſoul the ſame as Beauty.

The eſſay on Beauty by Father Andrew the Jeſuit, who the celebrated Diderot found ſo juſt, has not, in my opinion, explained Beauty better than others. He divides it and ſubdivides it; and laſtly ſays nothing more, than that its different claſſes conſiſt in REGULARITY, ORDER, PROPORTION, &c. all which is in ſubſtance to explain the obſcure by what is more obſcure. If the Father ANDRES will define ORDER as a BEAUTIFUL THING, he will have the ſame reaſon to define Beauty as an ORDINATE THING.

The above cited Mr. Diderot after having dealt out many ſyſtems upon Beauty, propoſes finally his own; but I fear that he will become a wreck upon the ſame ſhore which he has himſelf pointed out. Were I to entertain myſelf in analizing his ideas, I ſhould be diverted uſeleſsly from my ſubject: It will be ſufficient therefore to give a glance to the reſult of all his ſyſtem; which is the following: "Beautiful to me, is "all that which contains in itſelf any thing, to "excite in my mind the idea of relation, and "with relation to me, all that which excites "this idea." I leave the reader to judge what ſublimity is to be found in this definition.

In a little work which a few years ago was publiſhed at Rome, dedicated to Mengs, the origin of Beauty is attributed to ſelf-love: but

in this manner one only reverſes the idea; becauſe Beauty is a quality inherent to a beautiful object, and never to the perſon who receives the impreſsion.

If Beauty be defineable, no one in my opinion could have approached it nearer than Cicero; but the ſimplicity of his expreſsion will not, perhaps, have met the taſte of thoſe who wiſh to ſubtilize every thing. The Beauty of the body, ſays this great man, conſiſts in an exact proportion of members, united to a ſoft colouring. ET UT CORPORIS EST QUAEDAM APTA FIGURA MEMBRORUM CUM COLORIS QUADAM SUAVITATE, EAQUE DICITUR PULCHRITUDO; SIC IN ANIMO OPINIONUM JUDICIORUMQUE ACQUABILITAS, ET CONSTANTIA, CUM FIRMITATE QUADAM ET STABILITATE . . . . . PULCHRITUDO VACATUR. Cic. 4. Tuſe.

There is ſcarce an author who has treated upon this ſubject, that has not had a particular ſyſtem. It would be a loſs of time to wiſh to run over the whole. It will perhaps be ſufficient to give an idea of the diverſity of their opinions; and it is likewiſe the time to give mine upon that ſubject; but I ſhall confine myſelf only to the Beauties relative to the art of drawing.

Mengs in his youth believed Beauty of true and real exiſtence, and thought to be able to define it; but he knew not then the difficulty, and contented himſelf afterwards by giving ſome ideas of its effects. I ſhall explain in the mean time, that which I believe will be able to give ſome probability of a ſubject ſo difficult.

CHAP. II.

OF THE MANNER BY WHICH ONE MAY CONCEIVE WHAT IS BEAUTY.

When we behold a body which anſwers all its functions perfectly, according to the end for which it has been created, we call it a found body. Making the idea general, we call HEALTH the ſtate of that body. The word HEALTH cannot expreſs more than an abſtracted idea that the mind is formed of the body which we find in that ſtate. To give it any other exiſtence, is to run into Platonianiſm, which places all the world within our ideas, of which contagion one cannot entirely free Mengs. With the ſame analogy we will ſay then, that Beauty is an abſtracted idea; it is the idea of the ſtate of things which contain certain qualities, and which, as will be further explained make them beautiful; ſo that it has no exiſtence beyond the reach of our capacity.

CHAP. III.

OF THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES THE BEAUTY OF THINGS.

THE union of that which is perfect and pleasing remains evident, and it is that without doubt which renders things beautiful. That is perfect to mankind in which nothing appears to be deficient or superfluous; and pleasing is that which makes a moderate impression upon our minds. The ignorant can judge of the material impression which they receive, through the organs of the sight; but the perfect is to be judged alone by the intelligent, that is, by those who have observed minutely the property and quality of things which they have compared and reflected within themselves; from whence, disposing of the deficient and the superfluous according to their destiny, arises their perfection. He only is a judge of Beauty who has had much experience, and is of approved understanding; so one may affirm for certainty, that the choice or judgment of Beauty is always according to the understanding of the artist or observer.

The opposite to Beauty is uglineſs, which consists in imperfection and unpleasantneſs, and we judge proportionably of the one after the same manner as the other.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE PLEASING.

THE pleaſing is not in its nature beautiful, although the beautiful is always pleaſing. That which pleaſes me is not always pleaſing to every one; nor even to the ſame perſon at different times; and this ariſes from Taſte being an effect which the ſenſes receive and not the reaſon; nor is there a thing ſo imperfect as not to pleaſe ſome one.

THERE IS NO DISPUTING UPON TASTE is the general axiom. If by that we underſtand enjoying the flavour of a thing effectively, the propoſition is good; but if to the contrary is meant that every Taſte is good, nothing is more falſe.

A lady who eats chalk, earth, or any other ſimilar matter, has without doubt her Taſte, although a depraved one. Monſieur de la Motte, who was better pleaſed with the ſcratches of the new bridge of Paris, than by the Paintings of Raphael, had a Taſte though truly beſtial.

He who ſays, that one thing pleaſes him more than another, is not obliged to adduce his reaſons, but if he ſupports, that one thing is more beautiful than another, he is obliged to ſay why it is ſo.

There might be ſome whom the verſes of Lucan pleaſe more than thoſe of Virgil, and ſuch will not be conſidered ridiculous; but if they ſay that the firſt are more beautiful than the ſecond, every one will aſk them the reaſon. Every day we ſee people who like one colour better than another, and no one oppoſes their Taſte; but if they ſay that green is more beautiful than blue, they will paſs for fools unleſs they adduce ſome cauſe. If a woman who has for inſtance the whiſkers and form of a man, finds any one who is pleaſed with her perſon, few people would wiſh to contradict his extravagant taſte; but if he pretends to perſuade that ſuch a viſage is beautiful, every one undoubted will laugh at him. This ſufficiently ſhows that to underſtand and judge of Beauty, it is neceſſary to have the union of ſenſe and reaſon; but for Taſte the ſenſe is alone ſufficient. The Taſte of one is independent of that of others; but there are different Taſtes; ſuch as the good, the bad, the ridiculous and the extravagant.

Our cuſtoms and ignorance are ſuch, that we do not comprehend in the leaſt, in what conſiſted the enthuſiaſm with which the Grecians abandoned themſelves to the tranſports of Beauty. Among them, this was a quality of an eſtimation ſo extraordinary, that they held it for divine; and for that reaſon, in the works of the Arts they ſacrificed to it all which remained; thus, that in the expreſsion alſo of the greateſt paſsions, they were very attentive not to prejudice Beauty. Virgil repreſents Laocoon in mad-

neſs, roaring like a fierce Bull mortally wounded; but Ageſander knew how to expreſs all ſorrow without offending Beauty.

Innumerable examples may be adduced to ſhow in what degree Beauty was held by that delicate nation; but it is ſufficient to know, that even from the earlieſt times, one finds that beautiful perſons aſſembled in Elis to claim this prerogative, and that there were judges appointed to diſtribute premiums to thoſe who had moſt Beauty. At Sparta, Naſus, and in other places they celebrated likewiſe the ſame meetings.

The pretenders had to expoſe their beauties before Painters and Sculptors, who were competent judges of the matter; ſo that theſe had the beſt opportunities of examining the moſt beautiful bodies. Anacreon ſays, that nature having exhauſted all her treaſure in the formation of man and the other animals, by giving them robuſtneſs, ingenuity, celerity, and all the other prevailing qualities, nothing was left to give to woman except their beauty, which values and prevails more than all that which ſhe had beſtowed on the reſt.

In ſhort, the delicacy of theſe people arrived to figure to themſelves, that the ſoul which inhabits a beautiful body departs from it with greater reluctance than that which inhabits a brutal form, and that it leaves it by degrees as if departing from a ſweet and pleaſing dream.*

The idea which they had of natural beauty

* Philostrat. Icon. lib. I. cap. 4.

was nevertheleſs very different from that which we have, ſince it conſiſted in the perfection and proportion of the members, in the colouring, and certain repoſe, and in an air of majeſty which hid as much as was poſsible the imperfections of humanity, advancing it to the Divinity. We, to the contrary, eſteem that beautiful which neareſt approaches humanity and its neceſsity. Forms without ſymmetry, members without proportion, deportment without nobility, and other ſuch irregularities with us can conſtitute beauty, if there be a good complexion, lively eyes, and a ſhape which is called elegant; and if the whole together has much geſture and much expreſsion, but of that which denotes and provokes deſire. We are all matter and motion, the Greeks were all penſiveneſs and repoſe.

CHAP. V.

OF TASTE IN PAINTING.

THE word Taſte in Painting is uſed metaphorically, and is introduced by compariſon of the taſte of the palate which is one of our ſenſes; Flavour is the impreſsion which that ſenſe receives; and according as it is pleaſant or unplea-

ſant, ſtrong or weak, the mind judges it to be either good or bad.

The Arts ſerve partly our ſenſes, and partly our reaſon. The ſenſes receive their impreſsion, the underſtanding diſtinguiſhes it, and the reaſon judges it. In Painting, the ſenſe of the ſight may be compared to the taſte of the palate, and the viſible objects to flavours.

It will be then ſaid, that a perſon has not taſte in painting when his ſight and reaſon are not capable of receiving and of judging competently of viſible objects; as we ſay a perſon has not the taſte of the palate if he does not know how to diſtinguiſh one flavour from another, and if all flavours are indifferent to him. A man of good taſte in painting is him who has ſo much intelligence in the art as to know how to diſtinguiſh immediately if a thing be good or bad when it is ſo effectively and according to reaſon. A man therefore is of bad taſte, who bad and unreaſonable things pleaſe more than good ones.

In the ſame manner we ſay, that a Painter has bad taſte if among the objects of nature he generally makes choice of the bad for his art; and to the contrary, he will be of good taſte who makes choice of the beſt; and he who does not know how to diſtinguiſh the good from the bad, but only imitates the objects which preſent themſelves to him, will be a Painter deprived of every taſte; and this is the moſt numerous claſs. And ſince that taſte of which we ſpeak, is the produce of the genius and underſtanding

of the artiſt, it follows that he who has a good taſte, has good judgment, and he who has a bad one, has a weak mind, and he who has no taſte of any ſort is a ſtupid ſot. The ſame may be applied to the amateurs who are uſed to judge of paintings, and of every part of the art.

Continuing the ſame parallel of comparing material Taſte with the Taſte of the Arts, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that in the laſt as well as in the firſt, there are things which have much or little flavour, and ſome that have none; in the ſame manner in Nature are to be found things which make great impreſsion upon the ſight, and ſome which make little, and others which we diſtinguiſh only confuſedly. So that therefore ſince to pleaſe the ſenſual Taſte many things unite in order to rectify and improve the flavour; the judicious Painter may alſo unite thoſe objects which beſt improve, in order to produce a good Taſte, and a pleaſing ſenſation to the ſight.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE REASON BY WHICH BEAUTY DELIGHTS IN THE ARTS, AND OF WHAT SPECIE IS THAT DELIGHT.

Some people have believed, that the Taſte which Painting produces ariſes from illuſion, that is, from thoſe errors in which they ſuppoſe we are fallen when we ſee a Painting, imagining that we really ſee the thing which it repreſents. In the ſame manner they add, that we weep and laugh at a Tragedy and Comedy, becauſe we are truly perſuaded that the caſes are preſent which are therein repreſented. From whence they deduce that in Painting, whatever is moſt perfect in the imitation, will alſo be the moſt beautiful.

Theſe arguments are falſe in their principals and in their conſequences. No one who has the leaſt ſpark of judgment will ſuppoſe, even for an inſtant, that the thing is true which he ſees repreſented in a Painting. I ſay more, that if this were poſsible, the major part of Paintings would have an effect totally different from what they have. How can a perſon of delicate fibres and of a ſenſible heart, ſee with delight the cruelties which brutal ſoldiers exerciſe upon ſo many bodies of innocent children? and a de-

licate woman who faints at the ſight of a ſpider or a mouſe, how can ſhe be delighted and ſleep ſweetly having at her bolſter a monſtrous dragon which is going to ſwallow up the beautiful Andromeda? It is becauſe there does not ſubſiſt that pretended illuſion by which paintings are generally ſaid to pleaſe; to which we may add that it is not at firſt ſight an excellent painting moſt pleaſes, but it is when we have examined it with reflection and deliberation.

That imitation therefore is the more beautiful the more it is perfect, is another error which is inferred from the firſt. For what has imitation to do with beauty? That has its merit apart; for if the original be not beautiful, certainly the copy will not be leſs ſo the more it reſembles it. Beauty conſiſting therefore, as it is proved, in the union of the perfect with that which is pleaſing, nothing which has not this quality can ever be beautiful. Almoſt all the paintings of the Flemiſh ſchool are perfect imitations of things natural; nevertheleſs, no one who has a little criterion will know how to find in them true Beauty. They are certainly beautiful imitations for thoſe who ſtop at the material part of things and go no further; and here one might apply the ſentence of Quintilian: ADIO IN ILLIS QUOQUE EST ALIQUA VITIOSA IMITATIO, QUORUM ARS OMNIS CONSTAT IMITATIONE.

In what then conſiſts Taſte produced from true Beauty? This is a complicated queſtion, which requires a diſcuſsion rather extended; but I hope to be able to elucidate it if the reader will

have patience, and will deign for a moment to reflect within himself.

Thought is an essential thing to our soul; that is, to employ it in thinking, since the genius cannot have any other occupation. Exercising that faculty, it finds its satisfaction, and for that reason naturally researches objects to occupy it, but without disturbance; and it is this which is called CURIOSITY. When one suspends that exercise, or when it is carried to excess, or when in any respect we are obliged to think of things which do not please us, then follows that fatigue which is called TIRESOMENESS and the principal torment of the human heart. Nothing is so unpleasant to the soul as this sensation, and there is nothing it would not undertake to free itself from it. Those things which we call AMUSEMENTS, such as Plays, Poetry, Music, Painting, and infinite other things which foment and conserve society, have no other origin than the horror of TIRESOMENESS; and for that reason every one industriously occupies his genius, in the most pleasant manner he can. The soul however cannot occupy itself, but in two different ways. The one is receiving by the senses the impressions of external objects; and the other of reflecting, meditating and combining the ideas furnished by the memory. This last means is too laborious, and those souls are very rare who know how to live only in peaceable enjoyment found within themselves.

The most common means, and that which generally most pleases, is to partake of the impres-

ſions of objects by means of the ſenſes. Theſe impreſsions are pleaſing or diſpleaſing from two motives. The firſt conſiſts in agitating more or leſs the fibres of the organs, and the other in the ideas which they produce: of this however I ſhall not treat at preſent. A too lively colour, or a very powerful ſound, vibrates too much the nerves of the eyes and ears, and occaſions unpleaſant ſenſations; from whence it is neceſſary that the commotion be moderate, and that it does not agitate the nerves more than that which their nature requires. If it be not capable of cauſing in them ſufficient emotion, then there is no ſenſation; at leaſt the ſoul does not diſtinguiſh it; it feels only a certain confuſion incapable either of beauty, or uglineſs.

Since then that the moderate ſenſations are thoſe which moſt pleaſingly occupy the ſoul, it follows naturally, that thoſe objects which beſt produce that effect will be the moſt pleaſing; and if to this be added a certain connection which paſſes between ſome objects and the ſenſations, to produce clearly and with facility correſpondent ideas, it will be called EVIDENCE; and this is that which moſt ſatisfies our ſouls, becauſe it knows how to produce pleaſing ſenſations without being fatiguing in communicating the ideas; and fatigue is more moleſtation to the mind than the body.

Beauty, then, conſiſting in perfection and in pleaſing, the delight which reſults from it will

be proved by the ſoftneſs of the ſenſation, and by the evidence of its perfection.

If a beautiful object poſſeſſes beſides that ſome quality of what is called attraction, ſympathy, or ſuch like, (which is not my object at preſent to explain) how does it happen then that to men and women, Beauty, beſides the aforeſaid general effect, aſtoniſhes the ſoul with joy, which ariſes as without itſelf and produces that agitation and tranſport which is called LOVE?

The ſight of the ſame beauty in painting, makes an impreſsion more moderate; becauſe it does not go accompanied by any of the aforeſaid qualities; for which reaſon it effects the ſenſes with ſweet commotion, and occupies the underſtanding without occaſioning any perturbation.

CHAP. VII.

OF THOSE THINGS A PAINTER REQUIRES IN THE CHOICE OF BEAUTY.

THE thing moſt neceſſary to a Painter is, to be endowed with a delicate fibre, a very ſuſceptible heart, and with an underſtanding unprejudiced; becauſe without the firſt, Beauty will make no impreſsion; without the ſecond, there will be no ardour; and on failure of the third,

he will take one thing for another. He who ſeeks to make Beauty comprehenſible, ought to begin by comprehending it well, and feeling it firſt himſelf.

I have already ſaid, nor ſhall I tire in repeating it, that in no imitation, as a ſimple imitation, is Beauty, if the object imitated be not beautiful. Therefore all the fineſſe of the Art conſiſts, as Mengs has ſaid, in the knowledge of chooſing well, by imitating the beautiful and neceſſary parts, and leaving aſide the ſuperfluous and minute. Guercino, Caravaggio Valasquez, and infinite other painters, SERVUM PECUS, imitate very well the objects, by giving them ſuch force and relief that they appear real; but they want the art of a good choice, for which reaſon one ſeeks not Beauty in their works, and much leſs Grace, which is the ſame Beauty, rendered more delicate and more amiable. Their works make a ſtrong impreſsion upon the ſenſes, but none upon the mind, which leaves them as it found them.

Among all the objects of the univerſe, none is for man ſo ſuſceptible of Beauty as man himſelf, becauſe there is nothing which he knows and loves ſo well. What then are the things which make men beautiful? I believe it to be the evident appearance of his good qualities, his ſtrength, health, and moderation; and in women, health, moderation, and modeſty. One recognizes this quality by the different appearances. Health by its colour; ſtrength by the robuſtneſs of the members; moderation by the

repoſe of the attitudes, and by the ſimplicity of the form; and laſtly in women one diſcovers modeſty by the ſimplicity of the poſture, aided by a form more graceful and delicate than that of man.

When an artiſt arrives to expreſs all that which is neceſſary, with propriety, and in a manner the leaſt complicated, and leaving aſide all the ſuperfluous and inſignificant, and that which is improper and common, he may be ſure if he has not erred in other eſſential parts of the compoſition and execution, of having attained Beauty.

CHAP. VIII.

OF THOSE THINGS WHICH MOST DESTROY BEAUTY; AND WHY THEY DESTROY IT.

We have already ſeen that Beauty is diametrically oppoſite to uglineſs, which conſiſts in imperfection, and in diſpleaſingneſs to the ſenſes. There are moreover ſome things which without being directly oppoſite to beauty, deſtroy it, or at leaſt confound it. Theſe are ſuperfluities, and minutiæ.

The ſuperfluous is one of the many things which, without being ugly, contributes to ugli-

neſs. By the ſuperfluous in painting is underſtood all that which ſerves not, and without which one has a clear and diſtinct idea of perfection. In a painting, for example, whoſe action is repreſented in ſome edifice, it is not neceſſary to diſplay all the furniture, or to expreſs the Architecture with the ſame exactneſs as the principal figures, or to introduce more actors, or more things than thoſe which are neceſſary for the action; becauſe otherwiſe one renders it more difficult to comprehend; and the mind muſt by that employ more attention and of courſe more fatigue. Numberleſs painters fall into that error by beſtowing more care on the acceſſary, than on the principal parts; and one might ſay of them what Apelles ſaid to him who aſked his opinion of a painting he had done of Helena, SINCE THOU HAST NOT KNOWN HOW TO MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL, THOU HAST AT LEAST MADE IT SPLENDID.

Minuteneſs then is the true ſhore on which the vulgar painters become a wreck. The minute parts of things are not comprehenſible to our ſenſes; for which reaſon they ought not to be expreſſed. A painter who diſtinguiſhes almoſt microſcopically, all the pores of the ſkin, and all the hairs of the head and beard, renders himſelf laughable, and worthy of the gothic ages: he will be the beſt imitator, and will alſo find admirers who will praiſe him, but reaſon will condemn him, becauſe this exceſsive exactneſs in the minutiæ diſtracts the attention of the obſerver, and deſtroys every pleaſing idea by

occaſioning fatigue to the mind inſtead of delight.

A ſimilar defect has already been quoted from Horace, attributing it to a want of judgment in the artiſts, who expreſs with the greateſt accuracy the nails or the hair, but know not how to combine well the parts moſt eſſential: TOTUM COMPONERE NESCIET.

The reaſons by which the minute parts in painting and in other things fatigue the attention, and tire inſtead of pleaſing, and of conſequence cannot convey any idea of Beauty, ariſes from the mechaniſm of the eye: of which I ſhall give a ſhort idea.

We are obliged to correct three errors in every act of viewing a thing. The firſt is, that we ſee nothing where it is, nor out of ourſelves; the ſecond is that all objects preſent themſelves invertedly, appearing at the right that which is at the left, and below that which is above. The third is, that we ſee objects double, notwithſtanding the mind judges that we ſee things as they are, right and ſimple. The ſenſe of feeling is that which teaches this truth; and it is certain that every one learns to ſee, as well as he learns to read or write. The ſize of an object alſo is judged by the reflection which is produced by the ſame ſenſe of feeling; and as every idea of ſize is relative, according to the angle which the object forms in the eye, and which feeling has taught to be greater or leſs than another, thus rectifying itſelf ſtill more it

ſhews us how to diſtinguiſh the ſize according to the diſtance. Every eye is as a mirror, and the images of things repreſent themſelves in the the retina after the ſame manner as in a chriſtal; that is, within itſelf, and not where the objects are.

Feeling teaches us that theſe objects are truly external, and by force of renewing obſervations, the mind acquires the habit of judging properly of the true place of things.*

* I am not entirely ignorant of other systems contrary to the above theory of vision, written, perhaps, for spirit of singularity or contradiction, and for that reason I do not give myself the trouble to confute them. I shall only mention that of the Abbé Condillac, because his name could give weight to his opinion, and also authorise an error. This author gives his treatise of ANIMALS with a view of darkening, if he could, the glory of the illustrious Mons. de Buffon, and with only metaphysics undertakes to attack a man armed with all the points of mathematics, physic, natural history, philosophy, and eloquence.

He sustains that we do not see objects either double or inverted, because no images are depicted in the retina, it not being possible to paint images where no colour is given. He says, that in the retina, is caused only one perturbation, and that that perturbation is not colour, but may be an occasional cause of the modification of the mind; and when also the images are depicted in the retina, either double or inverted, one might from thence conclude that the mind proves the sensations and the imaginations in the same manner.

These arguments are so weak, that nothing would be more easy than to confute them with evidence, if the opportunity of the place permitted it, Whosoever fixes the sight in an object, separating the eyes with force, sees it double, because then the mind loses the habit with which it generally partakes of the sensations. How could Condillac imagine that the retina could experience commotions without a contact? And from what other thing can this contact be produced but from light? Who could imagine that the author of an excellent treatise against systems, should descend to one of the most discredited and periculous of all, which is that of the OCCASIONAL CAUSES of a good man, by Malebranche!

The ſmall aperture of the pupil is by which enter all the rays of light which reflect the object; and if the object be greater than that aperture the rays cannot enter without croſsing; it is therefore neceſſary that thoſe which come from below be repreſented in the ſuperior part of the retina, and that thoſe which come from above be imprinted in the baſe. Feeling remedies alſo that inconvenience, by teaching the true ſituation of objects; ſo that although we ſee objects double and inverted, we imagine notwithſtanding that we ſee them really ſimple and direct, and we perſuade ourſelves that this ſenſation, which is a judgment of the mind inſtructed by feeling, is a real apprehenſion produced by the ſight.

All this is ſo clear, that there is no occaſion of other proofs. Upon that therefore I form my ſyſtem, with regard to the pain which objects too diminutive occaſion the ſight. Every large object of the aperture of the pupil is repreſented as inverted in the retina, and the mind, notwithſtanding, believes it direct or ſtraight. The habit contracted of judging thus, cannot change, without another habit equally conſtant to the contrary, which to adult perſons would coſt much time and fatigue. Suppoſe therefore that an object be ſmaller than the ſaid aperture of the pupil, it ought neceſſary to follow that its images will enter there direct, becauſe the lines which form the rays of light do not interſect in the entrance; and the mind then finds itſelf deluded, if it judges according

to the method taught by feeling, and will be found in contradiction with itſelf; for which reaſon, to form a true idea of the ſituation of that object, it will be conſtrained to make new reflections. This, therefore, cannot follow without a painful effort, becauſe we cannot diveſt ourſelves of a conſtant habit without much fatigue and attention.

In this then, conſiſts all the mechaniſm of that which the ſight ſuffers from objects very minute. The meaſure of the ſize which an object ought to have to enter direct or inverted into the eye, depends upon the ſize of the aperture of the pupil; but I leave this point to be diſcuſſed by thoſe who treat of optics; and alſo ſhall omit to examine why children have the ſaid aperture leſs than grown perſons.

CHAP. IX.

OF CLARE OBSCURE.

He who does not know what Clare Obſcure is, (and few Painters there are who know it) believe it to be white and black, becauſe generally the Clare is painted with white, and the Obſcure with black; the one reſembling light, and the other ſhade. But the thing is not thus.

Clare Obſcure does not conſiſt in the colours, but in the art of uſing them, and of diſtributing intelligently the light and ſhade.

A ſurface which is not perfectly ſmooth and plain, reflects from every point the rays of light with different angles, becauſe the property of thoſe rays is to reflect in a manner that the angles of emertion may be always equal to thoſe of digreſsion; and ſince in an unequal ſurface each point is in a different elevation, it ought of courſe to form a different angle. Feeling has likewiſe rectified this ſenſation, as well as the other before mentioned, from whence the mind judges that to be elevated which reflects the light in a certain manner; that is, with a certain angle; and thus we have the idea of rotundity, and of the relief of things.

The parts moſt elevated reflect the rays of light in a manner different from the plain and convex, ſo that they appear more illuminated; and ſince each angle differs very little from that which is next to it, one ought to paſs by an imperceptible gradation from the one to the other; from whence if one paſſes rapidly from a large one to a ſmall one, it will repreſent the thing as if it were there intercepted or cut off, and the Clare Obſcure will remain deſtroyed. The Art therefore conſiſts in diſtributing the colours in a manner that they may reflect the light according to that effect which the taſte and wiſdom of the Painter preſcribe that they ought to have in a determinate place, without confounding the bright, and ſmooth, with the raiſed, although

both theſe reflect the greateſt quantity of light; but ſince they are very different, they ought to be expreſſed in a different manner.

One ought likewiſe to obſerve, that the rays of light are not all of an equal power; becauſe each colour is of a different intent; from whence one ought to ſtudy the colour which compoſes the maſs, to give the correſpondent tone its force.

Practice will be able to teach the Artiſt ſome rules, but without a good theory, he will always work in the dark, nor will ever produce any thing truly beautiful.

The Painters whom I call NATURALISTS; that is to ſay, followers of mere practice or RECEIPT, or in a word, the ignorant, pretend to work with the higheſt perfection when they imitate purely the accidents of light, taking it from one part, and copying all the Clare and obſcure in ſuch a manner, that they repreſent truth; this is as a fluid which runs and illuminates all the parts it meets in a ſtraight line, leaving Obſcure all the reſt. By this rule they make the illuminated parts too clear, and the others too obſcure; acquiring in truth, the effect of giving a great relief to the parts where the light ſtrikes, and they believe with that to have reached the ſummit of the Clare obſcure. They reflect not however, that the gradations ought to be imperceptible, for the reaſon which is here adduced; and that all that which is ſuperabundant, is ugly in place of being beautiful; becauſe a paſſage ſo powerful, rapid, and

ſudden from light to ſhade, offends the ſight and reaſon.

Correggio and Mengs knew the manner of avoiding the defect of the direction of light. They never took a great maſs of light only to illuminate their works, but meditated, with great judgment, which were the parts in their compoſitions that merited to be moſt viſible and raiſed; and they diſtributed the light upon each of theſe parts in a manner that it might illuminate all the Painting, not leaving any thing obſcure; ſo that it appears that the ſight paſſes into their figures, and there remains as if enchanted by the harmony which is formed by the contrapoſition of the various lights and ſhades. In ſuch manner have theſe great men avoided that diſagreeable effect which thoſe occaſion who take one light only, the ſame as if it entered through a window or a hole to illuminate their paintings.

Theſe two great profeſſors knew likewiſe, that light does not operate only in a direct manner, and that it does not touch any thing which it does not reflect, communicating part of its rays to the other immediate objects. From whence they have found the ingenious artifice to illuminate by reflection all thoſe parts which could not take a direct light; and by this invention, they gave ſuch clearneſs and harmony and ſuch relief to their Paintings, that the eye is enchanted without knowing how or from whence the light comes.

To render more marvellous the works of theſe two Painters, concurs alſo their knowledge in the perſpective aerea. The rays of light reflecting from the objects to the eye, are ſtrong or weak according to their diſtance, their maſs, or their intermediate denſity; for which reaſon, a near object ought to be expreſſed with more ſtrength than a diſtant one, and the contours of the firſt, more diſtinct than thoſe of the ſecond. The lineary perſpective, ſhows only the figures which in the eye form the objects as ſeen from a determinate point; and the aerea ſhows the degree of light which ought to be conveyed to the eye according to its diſtance. This has its fixed and mathematical rule, which depends not leſs upon the obſervations and nature of the light, than upon our ſenſes; for which reaſon, that which is moſt complicated, is likewiſe moſt difficult: from this knowledge depends in great part the perfection of Painting.

CHAP. X.

OF BEAUTY IN COMPOSITION

It would be preſumption to give rules upon Compoſition after thoſe which Mengs has given. I ſhall therefore ſay only a few words upon the

Beauty which enters into the whole of Compoſition, ſince till now has only been ſpoken of its parts.

We have ſeen that an object is beautiful in Painting, when it unites in itſelf the idea of perfection and of pleaſing, and when the mind partakes of it with facility, and with the leaſt application poſsible, that is, when the thing is evident: this evidence is the true ſource of Beauty.

Compoſition is only the Art of collecting the parts which compoſe a whole. The Painter as well as the Poet, is at liberty to invent, and ornament his ſubject as he likes, according as his judgment is good or bad; the one and the other therefore ought to be ſubject to veriſimilitude, and the rules of Beauty.

The Poet has the advantage of being able to repreſent his action in various points, by means of narration; but the limits of the Painter are more confined. He is obliged to chooſe one point only of all the action, and in that to repreſent it preciſely, and almoſt to concentre it, without making account of that which precedes, or that which follows.

This point ought to be the moſt eſſential of the hiſtory, by which one comes to underſtand eaſily the whole; and as Mengs ſays, the hiſtory ought to be explained by the Painting, and not the Painting by the hiſtory.

From thence it follows, that no Compoſition can be beautiful which does not expreſs its intent with ſuch evidence that a moderate underſtanding may comprehend it at firſt ſight,

and without fatiguing its attention. Every time it is in want of an explanation, though ever ſo trifling, there is no longer Beauty. It is ſtill worſe if it be equivocal and ſuſceptible of different interpretations; and worſe ſtill if the action be divided or repreſented ſucceſsively. From all theſe errors one may cite practical examples; but I omit them, by reaſon that it may appear I do not wiſh to ſatirize any one. It is ſufficient to bear in mind as an infallible rule, that without evidence there can be no Beauty, and that the leaſt fatigue which it coſts the mind to underſtand a Compoſition, deſtroys all the Beauty which might otherwiſe have been in the execution.

CHAP. XI.

OF EXPRESSION.

If one had to ſay all which relates to Expreſsion in the Art, a voluminous work would not be ſufficient to contain it. He who wiſhes to inſtruct himſelf fundamently upon this important matter, ſhould obſerve that which is found diſperſed in the works of Cicero, Horace, Seneca, Pliny, Philoſtratus, and particularly in the judicious Quintilian; with the addition of

what Junius in his usual way has compiled, and digested in his treatise upon the Painting of the ancients. My intention is to treat of expression only as far as it contributes to Beauty.

By Expression, I mean the art of judiciously discovering the affections, by every sort of external signs. The union of the soul with the body is of such a Nature, that the emotion of the one, cannot happen without exciting a correspondent motion in the other. As the Painter ought therefore to represent his figures in action, he ought likewise to express in their appearance, and in every thing else, that situation and those emotions which the soul would produce in the body if it were really found in that state; but since among these emotions, enter more or less, some which are forced, and others which are natural, some noble, and others ordinary, and of a thousand other manners; it depends therefore upon the Taste of the Painter, to know how to choose those which produce Beauty; and likewise to know how to produce it with due precision.

He ought to know how to choose those lines which do not destroy Beauty. If the passion he wishes to express be very violent, and he copies materially some ordinary model, he will produce an affected and ordinary work, which agitating too much the fibres of the senses, will occasion pain in place of pleasure. Nevertheless, he ought not to lose for an instant the view of that grand principle in which consists all the mystery of the Art; which is, that the ob-

ject of Painting is to content the mind and the ſenſes; by always pleaſing them, and never fatiguing them.

When an artiſt has occaſion, for example, to expreſs the violent grief of a perſon, if he repreſents it with an open mouth, eyes inverted and convulſed, and with all his muſcles and members contracted and altered, he will ſometimes copy Nature faithfully; but he muſt not hope to find applauſe among thoſe who are intelligent, becauſe ſurely he will have produced an ugly work; becauſe it is not poſsible to alter ſo much the members and muſcles, and to conſerve the beauty of their form.

The Laocoon with his children, is an example of the moſt mournful ſituation that humanity can ſuffer; and this his artizans knew how to vary and expreſs in a manner, that at the ſame time the appearance expreſſes the moſt mournful idea, one does not ſee either geſture or convulſion to deſtroy the Beauty of the forms. In the father, one beholds a body pierced with the moſt dreadful torments, but of a mind forcible, and ſuperior to his misfortunes as a rock which is beaten by the floods. His children, leſs robuſt, expreſs greater impreſſions of grief, but the parts of the mouth and the eyes, which they turn to their father to aſk for ſuccour, and which is the correſpondent expreſſion of their eſtate and ſituation, expreſs their ſtate of mind, but without disfiguring the Beauty of their bodies.

The group of Niobe is another example of the noble manner with which the Grecians knew how to make viſible the ſituations moſt violent, without altering or brutalizing the objects. The Depoſition from the Croſs by Mengs, and eſpecially his expiring Chriſt upon the ſame, two paintings belonging to his Catholic Majeſty, are alſo Models of the moſt ſublime expreſſions of that kind. One ought therefore to eſtabliſh as a fundamental principle the practice of the Grecians, which was TO DO THE MOST WITH THE LEAST MEANS POSSIBLE.

The other emotions of the mind, which do not produce effects ſo viſible, are more difficult to obſerve; becauſe to diſcover their cauſes, it is neceſſary that the painter be a philoſophical obſerver of the labyrinth of the human heart, and that he knows anatomically the play which each effect produces in the body: all which is not to be done without great talent and ſtudy. The Grecians poſſeſſed that art to ſuch perfection that in their ſtatues one ſcarcely diſcovers that they had thought of expreſſion, and nevertheleſs the whole expreſs that which they ought to expreſs. They are in a repoſe which ſhows all the beauty without any alteration; and a ſoft and ſweet motion of the mouth, the eyes, or the ſole action expreſs the effect, by enchanting the mind and ſenſes.

Among the moderns (it is neceſsary to confeſs it) is introduced a ſect of Painters and of DILETTANTI who have nothing for true expreſſion except contortion, making with much

but very little effect. Idleneſs in thinking, and ignorance, are the ſources of that depraved taſte. The vulgar motions of a paſſionate perſon, who puts in violent contortion all his members; or the blood which runs in torrents from the wounded perſon; or the horridity of a dead corpſe; excite very little talent or inſtruction: it is ſufficient to have eyes and not to ſhut them. To diſcover the emotions of the ſoul, to ſurpriſe as one may ſay its hidden ſecrets, and to know how to expreſs all that externally without altering the beauty of the form, requires great attention, and greater philoſophy. Neither is all this ſufficient to attain the end; it is neceſſary alſo to think with propriety, that is, of the character of the perſon; ſince a Hero or a Prince is not ſo paſſionate as a Ruffian, nor a Deity as a mortal being. And more, the Expreſsion ought to be derived from Truth and not from Imitation; for as Mengs ſaid, there is a great difference between a perſon truly agitated, and the Comedian who repreſents him; and Terence ſo many ages paſt had already diſcovered that difference.

. . . . . EX ANIMO OMNIA,
UT FERT NATURA, FACIAS, ANDE INDUSTRIA.

In portraits we often behold a face which is not to be found in a whole nation together. Very rare is he who contents himſelf to portray or to be portrayed as God has made him. He is to be ſituated in a poſture which is ſaid to be LIVELY without knowing wherefore. The eyes, the mouth, the geſture, are to

be twiſted or untwiſted according to the idea or fantaſy of his happy genius; either by ſhortening or twiſting the body in a contrary ſenſe, or by throwing indirectly the body and head, elſe by modelling it in attitudes of dancing; in fact all is done that can be to belie the portrait, and not to obtain the point propoſed, becauſe all that which alters the natural form, and wreſts it from its natural repoſe, is ugly and unpleaſing.

There is no good portrait or ancient ſtatue (except thoſe which require a forced poſture) which has not the head inclined towards the breaſt. It appears that in general the Ancients thought that poſture the moſt natural, to the end that their images ſhould captivate the minds of the ſpectators by appearing as if they would wiſh to converſe with them; and thus they avoided the odiouſneſs, which arrogance produces, denoted by a ſtraight neck, or the head thrown back.

Finally I conclude, not to be more diffuſe, by advertiſing that Expreſsion is not limitted to mark the paſsions of the mind only in the face. Every particular member, poſture, motion, drapery, landſcape, architecture, trees, and laſtly the light itſelf, the ſky, and whatever enters into a painting is all ſuſceptible of Expreſsion, and all ought to contribute to Beauty

CHAP. XII.

OF THE GRAND, THE MIDDLING, AND THE INFERIOR STYLE.

WHEN we ſay in Painting that a ſtyle or figure is grand, one ought not to underſtand the grandeur of the ſize; the ſame with regard to the middling and inferior ſtyle; becauſe the quality of a painting is not meaſured by its ſize. The grand or great ſtyle, as Mengs ſays, is when we make a choice of great parts, leaving aſide mediocrity, and the inferior ſtyle.

Every thing in Nature is compoſed of ſome principal, and ſome minor parts, and thus gradually to infinity. Our ſight cannot diſtinguiſh the firſt elements of things, nor can Painting propoſe to imitate it, much leſs to repreſent it by its colours. A human face, for example, is compoſed of the forehead, brows, eyes, noſe, cheeks, mouth, chin, and beard. Theſe are the great parts, but each of theſe contains many other minor parts, which alſo contain an infinity of others ſtill leſs. If the Painter will content himſelf to expreſs well the great parts which I have taken notice of, he will have a grand Style; if he depicts alſo the ſecond, his ſtyle will be that of mediocrity; and if he pretends to interſect the laſt his ſtyle will be inſignificant and ridiculous. However in a

gigantic figure, one might form a minute ſtyle, and in a ſmall figure a grand ſtyle.

Since Painting repreſents only the appearance of things, as ſoon as it gives the idea of them in the manner moſt eaſy, and leaſt confuſed, it has obtained its end, by giving the cognition of the object repreſented with poſsible evidence, and without fatiguing the attention, and for that reaſon the grand ſtyle is beautiful.

Some Painters of renown have formed a falſe idea of greatneſs, and are allured to inveſtigate it by ſentiments very tortuous and erroneous. Michael Angelo would have loſt with his credit the Taſte of his age, if Raphael had not oppoſed it with a Taſte much more wiſe.

He never during his long life, executed a work of ſculpture, or of Painting, or perhaps even of architecture with a view of pleaſing, or of repreſenting Beauty, which he knew only in order to make a pomp of his knowledge. In all his figures he ſought the moſt violent attitudes, or thoſe which appeared to him moſt convenient to make a vain ſhow of his anatomical ſcience of the muſcles, and bones; and he delineated all that with the greateſt force and violence, ſtrongly doubting if the beholders would well underſtand them. He thought to have had a ſtyle of grandeur; inſtead of which it was the moſt inſignificant, and perhaps the moſt vulgar and heavy. His contortions have been admired, and even adored by many, and they have called his ſtyle FIERY, TERRIBLE, and DIVINE. It may be whatever they like, but it certainly is not

grand or beautiful. Mad with the ambition of being thought learned, he never had any regard of pleaſing or ſatisfying the mind with Beauty.

It will be ſufficient to ſee his famous GIUDIZIO to be convinced of what I ſay, and to what a height might arrive the extravagance of a compoſition. Falconet, who cannot always be abſurd, ſaid the admired Moſes appears rather a galley-ſlave, than an inſpired legiſlator.

Dolce in his Dialogues, without comprehending the true cauſe, remarks, nevertheleſs, theſe defects of that celebrated profeſſor; but for one who has the uſe of reaſon, he muſt have judged with his eyes cloſed, when he aſſerted, that Michael Angelo was all divine.

His works, notwithſtanding merit to be ſtudied, in order to learn the correction of drawing, and the ſkill of anatomy, always however with the remembrance, that theſe are only the means and never the end of Painting.*

* Some persons jealous of the reputation of Michael Angelo, more than that of any other author, and perhaps more than of their own, are scandalized by the severity of this judgment. To ease therefore their consciences, one could here cite similar judgments which great professors have pronounced upon the Artists called DIVINE.

In order not to be fatiguing, I shall content myself by quoting what the learned Mr. Fuessli, (who published in German at Zuric, the works of Mengs upon Beauty) says in a letter which is at the end of the second volume of those of Winkelman, and runs thus.

" Tous les artistes font de leurs saints des vie, illards sans doute
" par ce qu'ils pensent que l'âge est nécessaire pour donner
" la sainteté; et ce qu'ils ne peuvent donner de majesté et de
" gravité, ils le remplacent par de rides et des longues barbes.
" On en voit un exemple dans le Moïse de l' Eglise de S. Pierre
" aux Liens du ciseau de Michel Ange qui a sacrifié la beauté à

" la precision anatomique, et à sa passion favorite, le terrible
" ou plutôt le gigantesque. On ne peut s'empêcher de rire
" quand on lit le commencement de la description que le judicieux
" Richardson donne de cette statue. COMME CETTE PIECE
" EST TRE'S FAMEUSE, IL NE FAUT PAS DOUTER QU'
" ELLE NE SOIT AUSSI TRE'S EXCELLENTE. S'il est vrai que
" Michel Ange ait étudié le bras du fameux satyre de la ville Lo-
" dovisi, qu'on regarde à tort comme antique, il est très probable
" aussi qu' il a étudié de même la tête de ce satyre, pour en don-
" ner le caractère a son Moise. Car toutes deux comme Ri-
" chardson le dit lui même, ressemblent à une tête de bouc. Il y
" a sans doute dans l'ensemble de cette figure quelque chose de
" monstrueusement grand, qu'on ne peut disputer à Michel Ange.
" C'étoit une tempête qui a présagé les beaux jours de Raphael."

REFLECTIONS

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS

UPON THE THREE GREAT PAINTERS,

RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN.

AND UPON

THE ANCIENTS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The title of these reflections might induce some people to believe that they are a repetition of what Mengs has said in his Treatise upon Beauty; proposing there and here the parallel of the three great Painters, Raphael, Correggio, and Titian. Certainly the object is the same; but the Reader will find it filled with such novelty, extension, and learning as such great principles require, and will not lose his time by reading it. Mengs wrote it to substitute the said Treatise upon Beauty, when he thought to suppress the printing of it, as one may see in the letters to Winkleman.

The manuscript from which these works are taken, is a labyrinth full of repetitions, and deficient in many essential parts; and notwithstanding all the pains which have been taken to put it in order, and to elucidate it, it has not been possible to reduce it to an exact and regular method. One might have been able to alter the whole together, and by that to take from it its greatest worth, which is the original style of the Author, who is here left to speak his own language, in order that he may become more instructive in spite of his repetitions, which otherwise consist of points of importance for Painters and Amateurs.

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE THREE GREAT PAINTERS

RAPHAEL, CORREGGIO, AND TITIAN,

AND UPON

THE ANCIENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

RAPHAEL is undoubtedly the firſt among the greateſt Painters, not for being more rich than the others in poſſeſsing a greater quantity of perfect parts in his profeſsion, but for having the quality moſt important; becauſe Painting being compoſed of Deſign, Clare Obſcure, Colouring, Imitation, Compoſition, and Invention; it is certain, that Raphael poſſeſſed the Art of Deſigning and Compoſition in a high degree, as well as ſufficient invention: In the mean time, Correggio remained excellent in Clare

Obſcure and Colouring; and Titian was great only in Colouring, and in imitation of Nature. From whence one may ſay, that Raphael was the moſt eſtimable, becauſe he poſſeſſed the moſt neceſſary and noble parts of the Art. Correggio poſſeſſed the moſt amiable and enchanting: Titian contented himſelf with pure neceſsity, which is the ſimple imitation of Nature.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL RULES TO JUDGE OF THE MERIT OF PAINTERS.

TO know the merit of the profeſſors of an Art or Science, it is neceſſary to know the fundaments of the ſame Science or Art. Painting has different parts, as well general as particular. Some are ſo eſſential that without them no one can call himſelf a Painter; others render the profeſſors more precious or more diſtinct, more common or more trivial.

The quality moſt neceſſary is the imitation of all things, which can be conceived and repreſented in a moment. The ſecond conſiſts in the ideal, that is, in the repreſentation of things which have no original; from whence the Painter has to repreſent it according to the conception which he has of it in his mind, without its having paſſed by way of the ſenſes.

In order to arrive to the firſt degree, which is nothing more than ſimple imitation, it is ſufficient to have the ſight exact, and not to be deceived in the object which one has to copy. For the ideal part it requires much talent, and great imagination.

This laſt part, when Painting firſt began, was not able to arrive to that point which it reached afterwards, for this ſimple reaſon, that the ideal part is the perfection of the Art, and no Art can be perfect in the beginning.

Theſe two qualities which form, as one may ſay, two ſpecies of painting, comprehend even the moſt minute parts; which I ſhall explain by an example.

A Painter of the firſt kind, that is him who ſtudies only what is merely neceſſary, will make a head or a hand to a beautiful figure, but will make it with all the little imperfections generally found in Nature; nor will he know how to chooſe the beſt among the good, to make a work which approaches to ideal perfection. To the contrary, a Painter of a high degree will take from Nature the beautiful only, avoiding the imperfect and defective; and will omit alſo the beautiful parts when they do not accord well one with another, ſuch as a body fleſhy and robuſt, with hands thin and meager; the full breaſt of a beautiful woman, with a neck lean and ſkinny, &c. Each of theſe parts may be beautiful by themſelves, but produce a bad effect when united with others which do

not correſpond, although Nature often makes ſuch unions.

From whence I conclude, that the firſt will be only an able artizan, but the ſecond ought to be a philoſopher, and a profound connoiſſeur of natural things; and ſince one cannot arrive to the laſt degree without having paſſed the firſt, from this ariſes the ſuperiority of the one to the other.

To arrive therefore to perfection in Painting, it is neceſſary firſt to accuſtom the ſight to the greateſt exactneſs; then to put in practice the rules of the Art, and of repreſenting all things: theſe are the fundaments. In the ſecond place, it is neceſſary to accuſtom the ſight to good objects, in order to ſeparate them from the bad; to diſtinguiſh the beautiful from the good, and the beſt among the beautiful. The third requiſite is to know the reaſons by which one thing is more beautiful than another, and why it is after a certain manner, and not otherwiſe; nor can this be obtained without a good talent and judgment, nor without certain ſtudies, which in ſome manner ariſe from without the limits of Painting, or at leaſt are baniſhed from the ſchools of our time; ſince we ſee that noble profeſsion reduced almoſt to a mechanical trade, by inculcating continually that one may learn it by force of practice, the ſame as the ſhoemaker learns his apprentice to make ſhoes: thus by habit of making Paintings they pretend to become Painters.

I exhort the ſtudents of Painting always to conſider it as a liberal Art compoſed equally of mechaniſm and of ſcience, in order that they may thus know how vaſt are its limits. The great diverſity which is obſerved in the merits of all Painters, depends upon the greater or leſs portion which each poſſeſſes of the two aforeſaid qualities, and of the degree of their perfection. Thoſe who have more mechaniſm than ſcience, are low imitators of Nature, ſuch as are the Dutch Painters. Thoſe who limit themſelves only to the ideal, will never produce more than ſketches; nor can they finiſh any thing, becauſe they want the mechaniſm ſo neceſſary to the accompliſhment. I could adduce for example Puſsin, as a proof of this inconvenience, and Raphael for the union of mechaniſm and ſcience.

The ideal, nevertheleſs, is as much more noble than the mechanical part, as the ſoul is ſuperior to the body. Necker, Gerarde, and Miers have carried imitation to an inſurmountable degree. Raphael knew not the ideal as well as Puſsin; but that part of it which he did poſſeſs, he knew better how to unite with imitation. In imitation Gerarde was ſuperior to Raphael; but Raphael better combined nobleneſs with the ideal; by which upon the whole he has ſurpaſſed the two moſt excellent artiſts in the two extremes.

With theſe principles it is eaſy to judge of the merit of Painters, ſince between two equals, one in the imitation and the other in the ideal, it is

juſt to prefer the laſt to the firſt ; and if a third unites the two qualities he will be the moſt eſtimable of all, as he poſſeſſes the art intire.

I have ſaid that a Painter merely ideal, will produce only ſketches without concluſion ; now I adjoin if ever is to be found ſuch a Painter, he will be very little eſtimable: he will be a painter of dreams. When I have ſaid that Puſsin made ſketches of things, I intended to ſay, that he has exceeded in the ideal, obſerving it even in the form of a hand or foot; and that, abſorbed in the idea, he left thoſe parts without finiſhing and conducting them to their natural perfection ; but he was not intirely ignorant of imitation, and for that reaſon he is a Painter of great merit.

CHAP. II.

GENERAL EXAMINATIONS UPON RAPHAEL.

I HAVE already ſaid, that the firſt and beſt Painter after the re-eſtabliſhment of the Art, has been Raphael, becauſe before him no other had poſſeſſed the parts either in quantity or in quality equal to him, and afterwards no one has appeared in compariſon. My aim is now to obſerve by what means he has arrived to ſuch eminence, and what one ought to do to imitate him.

Raphael was born at Urbino in the year 1483. His father was a Painter, in which he was fortunate, becauſe a father naturally teaches his profeſsion with more anxiouſneſs and care to his ſon than to a ſtranger; from whence Raphael was aſſuredly educated in his art with the greateſt attention. When he appeared to the world, no other maxim was obſerved in painting except that of imitation; and the beſt imitator was the beſt Painter. Since that quality could not be acquired without great diligence and exactneſs of of ſight, Raphael took the firſt rudiments from theſe good maxims, which are the moſt neceſſary to any good or middling genius; becauſe the one at the leaſt will arrive to obtain imitation, and the other will ſurpaſs it.

Little fatigue remained to Raphael in theſe inſtitutions, as well from the perſpicuity of his genius, as becauſe each part alone is always more eaſy to learn, and eſpecially imitation, than is that which manifeſts itſelf more to the ſenſes.

His father, John Sanzio, put him to ſtudy under Peter Peruginus, to learn the practice of the Art, which in his houſe he had not the opportunity to exerciſe for want of works of conſideration.

The diſciple very ſoon equalled the maſter, becauſe his fort conſiſted in the imitation of Nature, and Raphael had learnt that from his father; from whence he took from Peruginus only the practice of painting in freſco, in oil, and in

diſtemper; which coſt him but very little trouble.

He went from thence to Florence, where the firſt things that he ſtudied were the works of Maſacci in the church of del Carmine, and here he acquired a little of the taſte of antiquity, leaving aſide the ſtyle of broken and ſhort folds of his maſter. Yet, notwithſtanding, he could not entirely get rid of that trifling taſte which he had imbibed in his education; although he was now become a little more elegant.

On account of the death of his father, he had occaſion to go to Urbino, and there hearing of the cartons of Michael Angelo, and of Leonardo da Vinci, done in order to be painted in freſco, he returned to Florence, and having ſeen thoſe of Michael Angelo he did as Bees who extract honey even from bitter flowers, becauſe Buonarroti was a remedy too violent for Raphael. That ſtyle ſerved him, notwithſtanding to correct his trite and trivial taſte, and to abandon his mechanical manner; and ſince the great preciſion of the eye which he had acquired from his infancy, made him maſter of his pencil to execute with facility whatever he thought or deſired, he was not expoſed to the fear of an erring hand; as happens to many of us in this age, in which one ſtudies more to deſign with maſterly touches and quickneſs, than with truth and exactneſs: it was eaſy to him, I ſay, to change his ſtyle, and to imitate that of theſe profeſſors.

The friendſhip which he then contracted with Father Bartholomy of Saint Mark, was very

uſeful to him in learning from him, to paint as well as Michael Angelo had deſigned. Notwithſtanding, he liked not to follow him too near, in order not to quit the ſcrupulous exactneſs which he preferred always to every thing elſe. Nevertheleſs, he learnt to aggrandiſe much his taſte, by painting with colours more ſtrongly impaſted, and in greater maſſes than he had done before that time In this manner he left aſide little pencils, and baniſhed the grey from his tints. He no longer cut with his folds the form of the nudity which was under, or divided them with little black ſtrokes; he conſerved in the drapery the ſame clare obſcure which the figures ought to have when they are made; in ſhort he learnt to execute the good parts, which Father Bartholomy and the Maſacci's had indicated.

Being returned to Urbino he ſoon made known his progreſs, and diſcovered his new taſte in a painting of the Depoſition of our Lord, painted in a chapel. He was invited on that account by his uncle Bramante to go to Rome, where he was commiſsioned to paint in the new apartment, called DI BORGIA, or DELLA SEGNATURA. He there began (according to different writers) by the four circles of the cieling, in which he ſtill conſerved, as is very obſervable, much of the ſtyle of Father Bartholomy. This however pleaſed ſo much, that the Pontiff ordered the paintings of the other Painters who had painted upon the walls to be cancelled,

not being able to reign in competition with Raphael.

He began therefore to paint one of the walls, repreſenting the meeting of the Doctors of the church, or as it is generally called, the painting of THEOLOGY, with the Trinity above, and with the Patriarchs, intermixed with other Saints and Angels. This is a moſt admirable painting, if one conſiders each part by itſelf; but it is well known, that Raphael found himſelf embarraſſed by the great field which he had undertaken, and the laborious attention which it required; becauſe the ardent deſire of doing it well, made him fall into ſome debility, which happens alone to the moſt elevated genius's, from the deſire of performing things extraordinary.

The time in which he lived, and the little experience of his age, which could not be more than twenty five years, made him renew the idea of Peruginus, from whence he drew the rays of light in gold relief, and there ſtrung Angels and Cherubims, with other ſimilar extravagances. One may, however, excuſe Raphael in that, ſince it happens the ſame in our time; for we ſee amateurs who approve only of that which comes credited by the example of ſome painter of fame; from whence it is poſsible that the partizans of Peruginus would not have praiſed this painting, if they had not found it rich of gold. But every one ſees that this is not a good excuſe: however for me it is ſufficient to ſhow the way followed by Raphael in order to arrive to ſuch greatneſs as he did.

All the parts of that painting are done with the higheſt attention; and one ſees that he began by the right ſide, and terminated by the oppoſite. The parts which are towards the firſt ſide, one obſerves to be dry, painted therefore with diligence, and well impaſted with colours; ſcarce any thing is retouched, and it is there one diſcovers the Taſte of Father Bartholomy. One ſees that all the parts are taken from Nature; that is, copied from deſigns done from Nature; but the more the work advances, the more one beholds the ſucceſsive progreſs of his good ſtyle, and one diſcovers alſo, that ſurmounting every timidity he worked with more liberty.

In all the paintings which he did in this room, one ſees the ſame track. The firſt things are of a timid pencil, but however very elaborate. Here one neither diſcovers the ſtyle, or the maxims of a man of conſummate knowledge; becauſe the contours are ſtill of an indeciſive character, and it appears that he was afraid of adding or taking from it. The folds are well finiſhed; the eyes are beautiful, but marked with timidity: the whole appears more beautiful at a near view than at a diſtance.

To the contrary, the works of his laſt taſte appear done with greater facility. Here one beholds ſome original traits, ſuch as thoſe which remain from the contours of the cartons: the drapery is leſs finiſhed, but has more effect from afar off, becauſe he knew that the little gradation which he firſt gave it, rendered it inviſible, in being viewed from a diſtance; he therefore

advanced more the two extremes of the clare obſcure; fixed with more boldneſs the colours of the contours; corrected himſelf in the timidity of adding and taking from parts, a defect which made him appear cold; he found that the little parts were the firſt to be loſt in diſtance, and in the interpoſed air, and that on this account it was neceſſary to agrandize them in larger works; he abandoned the uſeleſs parts and learnt to diſtinguiſh the moſt or the leaſt neceſſary; he obſerved that the bones ought to be attended to more than the folds of the ſkin, and that the tendons ought to be more viſible than the fleſh; that the muſcles in action merit more attention than thoſe which are inactive; that the force of the drapery does not conſiſt in each ſeparate fold, and that theſe folds, which one finds in the middle of ſome clear maſs, ought not to be cut off by any obſcure, nor be ſo preciſe as thoſe which fall upon the joints; that in general one ought to obſerve in them the reflections of light, ſuch as in a bunch of grapes in which thoſe expoſed to the greateſt light reflect it in a manner which almoſt diſſipates all obſcurity.

Whoever would wiſh to ſee all the aforeſaid rules and ratiocinations in the moſt perfect execution, has only to examine attentively the painting of the ſchool of Athens, in which Raphael has put it in practice with wonderful ſkill.

Even at that time Raphael had not propoſed more than to follow Michael Angelo,

and here he became ſtimulated by the extraordinary credit and exaggerated encomiums which every one beſtowed on that profeſſor; this led him from forming any other ſuperior ſtyle, and made him loſe the moſt precious time. But ſince he was endowed with an original talent, it was not poſsible that he could content himſelf with being a ſimple imitator. That which is natural to one, becomes artificial, and affected to another, and a copy always wants that fire and brilliancy which is to be found in an original. For this reaſon Raphael loſt a part of his natural merit in wiſhing to imitate the hero of the Florentine ſchool. The advice of his friends, who ſuffered him not to remain a copyiſt, and eſpecially his natural genius and diſcernment, awakened him from that ſlumber, during which his reputation was abaſed; becauſe the public held him as an imitator inferior to his model, ſuch as in the paintings of the Conflagration of Borgo, and of the defeat of the Saracens, in which he was eager to approach more the ſtyle of Buonarroti.

Thus awaking he became afterwards more ſprightly and cheerful, and as one who goes to an enterpriſe after ſweet repoſe, he undertook the painting of the transfiguration, which the Cardinal, nephew of the Pope, wiſhed to give to the King of France; and he executed it with the greateſt ardour, becauſe he knew that Michael Angelo wanted Father Sebaſtian del Piombo to oppoſe him with another painting of which Michael Angelo himſelf had done the deſign. Raphael was

glad of it, and said that Buonarroti did him by this a great favor, since he thought him worthy of competition with him and not with Father Sebastian.

In this painting Raphael is no more that free and ardent Painter which he was in the frescos of the Vatican; he does not expose himself to any peril: nothing is lopped off or added to truth: he chooses thus the beautiful, discovers a new degree of perfection, and opens the true road to the Art.

In Raphael alone is found the three styles of painting; since in his first works he was, like the inventors of the Art, a pure imitator of Nature, but without representing it with its true grace. In his second, which are those of the Vatican and particularly in the School of Athens, he reduced the mechanism of the art, and the imitation of truth to the rules of Beauty, expressing all with force and boldness, being capable of following whatever his talent dictated.

He remained thus for some time, being intoxicated by self love, and the praises which he received; and not being abetted by any competitors, he committed almost all his works to his disciples. Finally his ardent genius began to advance; and since that was not possible by the beaten path, he undertook another more secure, searching a more perfect nature than that which he had followed before. He sought more variety in the drapery, more beauty in the heads, and more nobleness in the style. He perfected his Clare obscure, by putting it

more in a maſs; and notwithſtanding he was a great maſter, he was newly reduced to become a diſciple to perfection. His painting of the Transfiguration is a clear proof that he had acquired the higheſt idea of true beauty; ſince that work contains even more of it than all his anterior ones. The expreſsion is there more noble and delicate; the clare obſcure is better; the degradation is better underſtood, and laſtly, the ſtrokes are more fine and admirable, ſince one finds not any lines, or contours as in his antecedent works.

PART THE SECOND.

OF THE PARTS OF PAINTING, AND OF THE PERFECTIONS AND DEFECTS OF RAPHAEL.

CHAP. I.

OF DESIGN.

RAPHAEL began with a Deſign dry and ſervile, although ſufficiently correct. He then learned a ſuperior ſtyle, yet never ſo perfect, and competent as that of the ancients of the firſt degree, becauſe he had not on the whole that knowledge of true Beauty which the Greeks poſſeſſed. He was excellent in the characters of Philoſophers, Apoſtles, and in other figures of that kind. His women are not ſufficiently graceful, and he ſpoilt them by his convex turns, which render them in a certain manner trivial, and of a vulgar air; and when he wiſhed to avoid that error, he fell into another, ſtill worſe, which was harſhneſs.

He knew not Ideal Beauty, and for that reaſon was more excellent in Apoſtles and Philoſophers, than in the divine figures; that is to ſay, his Deſign comprehended all the contours which one finds in Nature, and which he imitated in every thing he did. He ſtudied the Antique pricipally in Baſ-reliefs; and acquired a taſte more Roman than Grecian. In his works one ſees the moſt minute tracks of the Arch of Titus and of Conſtantius, with the baſ-reliefs of that of Trajan. From thence he took the ſyſtem of marking principally the joints and bones, and of maintaining the contour of the fleſh more ſimple and eaſy. The aforeſaid Baſ-reliefs are not of the beſt taſte of antiquity; yet they are beautiful for the ſymmetry, and the relation of one member with another. By this ſtudy Raphael underſtood the propriety of characters, and the relation of the members better than any other painter. He made the figures of the proportion of ſix heads only, and they appear as beautiful as if they were of eight; which depends ſolely upon the juſt maxims of proportion; although in general his are not ſo elegant as thoſe of the Grecian Statues; nor are his joints ſo delicate as thoſe of the Laocoon, Apollo, or the Gladiator.

One perceives alſo how much Raphael ſtudied antiquity; and when this failed him, he ſoon failed alſo in the imitation; as one ſees in his hands, which he made not beautiful, becauſe he had not ancient models; very ſeldom finding ſtatues which preſerved it. He was alſo ſtill leſs happy in the

hands of women, becauſe nature offers but few beautiful; failing always in one of the extremes; either by being very fat, or very thin. I imagine that great man was habituated, almoſt always, to draw grown perſons, becauſe he never knew how to give to his children that morbidity, and fleſhineſs of a ſucking babe, which nature requires. He painted his children as thoſe of the ancients muſt have been; ſerious and reflective, and when he made any one for a model, one ſees that he did not pretend to any thing more than the heads, without even giving them the leaſt nobleneſs; becauſe, no doubt, they were models of the children of poor people, and plebians; as one obſerves in the Child of the Virgin della Seggiola copied aſſuredly from nature; which although it is of a lively phyſiognomy, wants much of that nobleneſs and beauty to be able to compare with the great elegance of Titian. Nor is he as great, or as noble as the authors of the aforeſaid ſtatues, becauſe he never believed that it was poſsible there could be any thing greater than the taſte of Michael Angelo, who ſeeking to be always great was always vulgar, and extending by a convex line beyond the limits of nature, he loſt the way to re-enter it again; and being fixed in his youthful brain that falſe idea of greatneſs, he maintained it through life, and was always overcharged. For this reaſon the works of Michael Angelo will always be much inferior to thoſe of the Ancients of good

taſte, becauſe although they knew how to make a figure robuſt, and muſcular, yet they never made it heavy. One ſees an example in the Hercules of Glinçon which in ſpight of being ſo large, and of a form ſo majeſtical, one knows very well that it is a perſon as light and as active as a deer, and that it is the ſame who conquered the lion Nemeus, and ſuſtained the world upon his ſhoulders. Michael Angelo could not with his ſtyle repreſent ſimilar things, becauſe his joints are a little ſtiff, and appear done only for the poſture in which they are put. His fleſhy parts are too full; of rotund form; and his muſcles are of a mould and form always equal, which hides the motion of the figures. Laſtly one does not ſee in his works any muſcles in repoſe: the greateſt error which he could have fallen into. He knew perfectly the ſituation of each muſcle, but gave them not their true form. Neither did he underſtand the nature of the tendons, becauſe he made them equal and fleſhy from one extreme to the other, and the bones too round. Raphael partook of all thoſe defects, without ever arriving in the theory of the muſcles to the perfection of Michael Angelo: by which I conclude, that it is neceſſary to ſtudy Raphael in the characters which are natural to him, that is, in old perſons, and in muſcular complexions, becauſe in the moſt delicate he is harſh, and in the moſt powerful he is a copyiſt of Michael Angelo.

Raphael imagined, and expreſſed wonderfully all human forms; and I believe if he had lived

in Greece when it was in its moſt flouriſhing ſtate, and where he would have ſeen ſuch beauties, he would have arrived to the moſt ſublime degree, and would have equalled the moſt celebrated of Antiquity. He knew not what was ideal Beauty, as he confeſſed in a letter written to the Count Baldaſſare Caſtiglione, when he painted the Galatea in the houſe of Auſtin Ghigi, now called the FARNESINA. In this letter he ſays, he was neceſsitated to imagine the Beauty which he wiſhed to paint, and for that reaſon he feared to make it inferior, becauſe to produce Beauty it requires a Beautiful model. By that is inferred that he knew not how to profit himſelf of the ancient ſtatues, ſince he ſought all his beauties in nature, and confided in his good talent for finding it. I believe therefore one might deduce that Raphael was not much an imitator of the ancients; and if for his pleaſure he ever imitated them, one might be convinced that they were the inferior ones and not thoſe of the higheſt taſte. He imitated them only in the general maxims, and in that part which one might call the practice or manner, but not in their beauty and perfection. He ſought in Nature the beautiful things which he had diſcovered in the ancients of the ſecond order, and with the ſame maxims he formed his taſte. He was therefore excellent in the natural things which he found in the ancients, and thoſe which he found not in them, he did not arrive to imagine.

That which I have ſaid until now, refers only to the form, and not to invention, or expreſſion, of which I ſhall proceed to treat hereafter.

CHAP. II.

OF THE CLARE OBSCURE OF RAPHAEL.

RAPHAEL underſtood well where, and how he ought to uſe the Clare obſcure; but he poſſeſſed no other part than that which regards imitation, and knew nothing of Ideal. One ſees however ſome traits of this Ideal in his works; but one likewiſe ſees very clearly that they are produced by chance, and the vivacity of his natural taſte, and not from the effect of method. The ſyſtem held by Raphael in his paintings, has been to repreſent his hiſtory, and drapery as if all the figures were dreſſed in white. Upon that ſuppoſition he has diſtributed his firſt lights where he believed they ought to be, and decreaſing from that even to the moſt diſtant part he continued diminiſhing; ſo that we ſee in the foreground of his paintings much white and yellow drapery. I think it was the maxim of Raphael and the Florentine School, to uſe very clear colours in the foreground of

Paintings, becauſe I ſee that the Lombardians, and other good colouriſts, uſed always in that part pure colours, ſuch as red, yellow, and blue; which are better adapted to approximate objects than light colours; becauſe the whitiſh give always an effect of air to the colours, and dull their vivacity. Beſides that, Raphael had another maxim alſo more erroneous, which was to give an equal light to the drapery, which from its nature ought to be of pure colours; that is, he would have made a veſt blue; as in fact he did for the Apoſtle who is ſeated in the foreground of the Transfiguration, and has the Clare quite white, which is not poſsible with the ſhade and half-tint ſo ſtrong as he has made them. And this is what I call raiſing the Clare to a white, or lowering it to a black. He obſerved the ſame rules in the obſcure; beginning by giving the greateſt force to the foreground, and decreaſing it even till it met with the Clare. This method was much after his taſte, becauſe from the moſt relieved he advanced the objects more than by any other method, ſince the parts in advance are the moſt powerful; but this is againſt propriety and the effective truth of nature, becauſe a white garment can never be in itſelf ſo obſcure as Raphael has made it, who to follow this practice was obliged to neglect that of reflection, which contributes ſo much to clearneſs and grace.

The aforeſaid practice of Raphael is leſs improper in a ſmall painting than in a large one;

becauſe in that there can be but little variety of Clare obſcure, as the maſs ought to be ſmall in order to advance or throw off the drapery and figures; and by that ſame reaſon he found himſelf conſtrained to uſe little degradation; becauſe if he had employed it much, he would have found by his practice the neceſsity of making his figures of the ſecond degree without force and effect.

I do not however mean to ſay that Raphael was entirely ignorant of the effects of Clare obſcure; I ſay only that his practice of deſigning, and to bring into the foreground, by means of white and black, all the figures which his fertile genius ſuggeſted to him, took him from this part, by making him think only of deſign; and for that reaſon one does not ſee two ſketches coloured by his own hand; and if at any time one ſees in his works ſome beautiful accident of Clare obſcure, it ariſes only, as has been ſaid, from the imitation of nature.

Raphael, according to all appearances, ſketched his works upon little models of wax, to ſee the effect they made; and I believe that the beautiful accidents in the Eliodorus, and the maſs of Clare obſcure in the Transfiguration are derived from the effects which he copied from his Models. I think one might alſo diſcover the ſame in the School of Athens, and in the Theology, where one might obſerve that in that part in which the models have been able naturally to produce a maſs, and ſhade, there is good Clare obſcure; and in the parts oppoſite to

the light, one ſees not any accident of this kind. Accidents in painting ſignify all the ſhades, which do not appertain to the roundneſs or graduation, and which the Painter is at liberty to make or not; as happens when one wiſhes that the half of a figure be illuminated only, it is the cuſtom to place it by the ſide of another, which deprives it of one part of the light, and ſince ſuch things are arbitrary, they are therefore called ACCIDENTS.

Raphael however did not underſtand that part, nor had in his Clare obſcure more than that which gives of itſelf a pure graduation, and I am almoſt perſuaded, that many times he contented himſelf to model only one part of his paintings, becauſe one ſees frequent errors of Clare obſcure.

CHAP. III.

OF THE COLOURING OF RAPHAEL.

RAPHAEL had not in his colouring thoſe examples which he found in Deſign, and was therefore conſtrained to begin by imitating feeble Nature, which happened likewiſe to Painters who preceded him; and having from the beginning painted in freſco, he could not exactly imitate Truth. The ſame happened to Correggio, who in his freſcos

is not so various or transparent as in his paintings in oil; and nothing remains of his natural style, except grace, and beautiful clare obscure. Titian could not have had any variety in that style of painting; and if any one would wish to support the contrary, I could convince him, that in that same style of painting, Raphael was more various than Titian: but we will return to Raphael. In his second style, which he took from Father Bartholomy, he has a better tone of colouring; he is not so grey, and he impasted better, but he is too uniform; all his figures are brown, and appear of a rough and ordinary skin. This taste remained with him a long time, and one may say that he never abandoned it entirely.

However when he began to do the frescos of the Vatican, he abandoned in some measure that style, by adopting another more finished; and although timid, yet he varied better, as one sees in the painting of Theology. He began then to imagine, that some complexions are white, and others are brown, some of an opaque tint, and others transparent, as one observes in the Christ and his Angels, who have flesh more delicate than men; for which reason that Painting is the best coloured of all that he has done in fresco. He here acquired practice, and great boldness in painting; but he discovered confusion in the colouring, as one sees in the School of Athens. He then corrected it a little in Eliodorous, which he coloured with more force and with a more free pencil, but he did not yet succeed in the delicacy of colouring; his women and children remaining in a

manner grey. Laſtly, the great attention which he paid to deſign, made him forget the colouring, as in the conflagration of Borgo. One ſees from thence, that Raphael neglected the parts which lead to perfection, and applied himſelf to acquire practice by diſpatching quickly, which opened to him a more eaſy road to fortune; and in fact he lived more as a prince than a painter.

This happened in the time of Leon the 10th. who was very indulgent and generous to Raphael, who flattered the ambition of that Pope, by ſuggeſting to him magnificent projects of architecture to embelliſh Rome, and to reſtitute it to the ſplendour in which it was under the firſt Roman Emperors. Theſe occupations by which Raphael gave his paintings to his diſciples, occaſioned a great loſs to painting. There is no compariſon in what he did in the time of Julius the 2nd. and thoſe under Leon the 10th; but to repair in ſome manner the injury which the art and his eſteem had ſuffered, he employed the whole power of his abilities in the great work of Transfiguration.

In ſome parts of this work, one obſerves a very good colouring; but it is not given equally throughout the whole; as his men have much better colouring than his women. There are parts not painted by Raphael; ſuch as the Energumenus and his group, where one diſcovers the timid pencil of Gulio Romano. The heads of the Apoſtles of the oppoſite part are repainted by Raphael, becauſe one here diſcovers all his bold and maſterly retouches; in that neverthe-

leſs there is too much uniformity in the tone of colouring, and the complexions appear hard and dry. In general he uſed little of yellow and vermillion. He underſtood very well the effect which obſcurity has in colours, by deſtroying and converting them into grey and black; and ſince he regarded not reflection, he laboured only with the clare and obſcure, of which he compoſed the half tints; for which reaſon they are all grey; and ſince delicate complexions require more variety than common ones, thoſe of Raphael are very uniform, and of a trivial colour, for want of reflection.

It has been a misfortune to painting, that Raphael in his beſt time had not painted wholly with his own hand ſome intire painting in oil; and that he ſuffered the whole to be ſketched by his diſciples, and principally by Gulio Romano who was of a taſte naturally hard and cold, and of a timid pencil, although ſmooth and finiſhed. I ſay it is a misfortune that Raphael had not finiſhed a painting alone, becauſe we ſhould then have ſeen what he could do in the part of colouring; becauſe we ſee clearly in the Transfiguration, that the heads of the Apoſtles repainted by him, and which from their character admit of a pencil lively and impaſted, are of a beautiful colouring. The head of the woman in the foreground of the painting is very grey. I believe when the painting was freſh, that head was not as it is at preſent, becauſe Raphael having retouched it lightly, to conſerve the ſmoothneſs and finiſh of Gulio Romano, the

light colours have not been able to reſiſt the effect of time. In the ſame figure there is a little correction in the large toe, where one diſcovers, that to hide the error of the firſt ſketch, he was obliged to impaſt it a good deal, and that part is much better painted and coloured than the reſt. One ſees the ſame correction in the thumb of the foreſhortened hand of the Apoſtle, in the foreground, and for this reaſon that part remains alſo better painted and preſerved. That which I ſay, one finds better in the portrait by Raphael which is preſerved at Florence in the houſe of Altoviti, in which one obſerves a ſtyle of painting reſembling more that of Giorgione and of Correggio, than of the ſame Raphael in his other works, and in which appears ſolely his deſign which is correct to perfection, and ſuperior to all other painters.

One ought not to wonder that the paintings of Raphael in freſco are of better colouring than thoſe which he painted in oil. I ſhall produce the different reaſons. He practiced freſco more than any other ſtyle of painting. The earth colours which he uſed, appear much more beautiful in freſco than in oil. Beſides he could not employ his diſciples to ſketch his freſcos, as he did his paintings in oil, in which he employed Giulio Romano, who ſketched almoſt all his works. It is impoſsible but one muſt diſcover the ſketch in a finiſhed painting, becauſe if one changes it intirely, it would be uſeleſs to make it. Raphael had many occupations; and inventing and deſigning ſo many things, left him no time

to paint the entire of his pieces with his own hand, for which reaſon he did only that which Giulo Romano was unable to do. He found beſides too little errors to diſcover the alteration which his works could ſuffer; and for that reaſon he contented himſelf with retouching them lightly, but with diligence, ſo that I believe he never ſuffered a picee to go from his hands which he did not believe finiſhed. Painting in oil has however the inconvenience, that the firſt grounds are always diaphanous when the humidity and the greaſe of the oil is exhaled; for that reaſon when paintings are old, they loſe the luſtre of the finiſhing hand, and leave diſcoverable the colours and retouches which are under.

From whence I conclude, that Raphael knew, notwithſtanding, how to colour very well, but that he had not ſufficient practice in painting in oil to paſs for a colouriſt when compared to his contemporaries Correggio and Titian, who were in that part very ſuperior. But with reſpect to colouring in freſco, he ſurpaſſed all painters of the Roman School, and equalled the beſt of the others; but ſince this kind of painting is ſomewhat imperfect, I do not believe that I ought to judge of it with rigour; and in oil he was not ſo excellent as to merit admiration.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE COMPOSITION OF RAPHAEL.

RAPHAEL was in Compoſition not only great, but wonderful. This is the part which does him the greateſt honour. Here he is original, not having had models to imitate, either from the ancients or moderns; from whence one might ſay, that he added to painting, that part, which the ancients, according to the idea we have of their works, did not poſſeſs to ſuch perfection; and if he had poſſeſſed the other parts of painting in a degree equally excellent, he would have been, without diſpute, the firſt painter in the world.

The principal thing which one ought to obſerve in a painting is the invention; that is, the expreſsion of truth in a ſubject; and in that Raphael has not had an equal. None of the figures placed by him in his hiſtory, could ſerve in a ſubject of different expreſsion. The ALLEGRO and PENSIEROSO, the choleric and the melancholic, are all placed in their perfect ſituations; nor is the expreſsion only in each figure, but the whole of the hiſtory with its epiſodes, equally correſpond to the paſsion of the principal figure. He diſplays his great talent in the marvellous variety with which he has known how to declare the ſame expreſsion; making ſometimes many

figures ſerve to one motion, and to the expreſſion of one ſole member, and that not by chance, but according to the true dignity, and force of expreſsion which it requires.

One ſees in his paintings, variety of things without contradiction; violent paſsions without affectation, and without baſeneſs, manifeſting the expreſsion ſometimes in the motion of a finger, and the effect of the paſsions in the tendons of the members. He knew how to employ and make many things beautiful, by the occaſions and manner of accommodating them, which in many caſes would otherwiſe have been defective. In ſhort, between a painting of Raphael and one of any other painter, there is as great difference in the expreſsion, as there would be between an Alexander the Great, and the Comedian who repreſents him; who might ſtudiouſly repreſent all the actions of the original, but certainly not ſo natural as the hero who was operated by impulſe. This diverſity ariſes from all the other painters not having known how to find the juſt emotions which the ſoul produces in the body; nor have they conſidered that every extreme is vitious, and that every action carried to exceſs is like a man without wiſdom. In place of dignified perſons they have frenetic figures, and when they have wiſhed to expreſs moderation, they have repreſented inſenſible objects.

Theſe means, being ſo difficult, one cannot find them but by the way followed by Raphael. But this is only granted to a great genius, and philoſo-

pher who obſerves ponderates and reflects on things; and ſuch ought to be the genius of a painter, and not as is vulgarly believed that which is full of fire. It is falſe, that painting only requires a lively genius; it requires a mind to know how to comprehend well different conſequences, and to diſtinguiſh the good from the bad: it requires beſids a ſenſible heart, in which virtue and the paſsions, are eaſily impreſſed. Such was without doubt the mind of Raphael; otherwiſe how could he have been able to have given ſuch variety to his compoſitions? He ought neceſſarily to have had the capacity of varying his own paſsions, and of conceiving with clearneſs the action he had to give to a perſon placed in a determinate ſituation, to know how to repreſent it in painting. The mind precedes the action, and he who has not firſt well imagined a thing, can never paint it; and if he does it by ſtudy, and by artifice borrowed from others, he will paint a body without a ſoul, nor ever will produce in the ſpectators the neceſſary impreſsion to warm their imagination to the point of repreſenting to them the action which is deſired.

To this effect Raphael had a practice ſecure, and totally different from other painters, who place all their attention in the group, and in the compoſition of each figure according to the contraſt and the rules of the art; but he began by diverſifying in his mind the end of his hiſtory, and of all the objects according to the general expreſsion: he then thought of each figure in particular, nor diſpoſed of any one without ex-

amining well the reaſon of all that which it ought to explain, beginning by diſtributing the members which have to operate, according to the paſsions of the mind, in their natural poſture, and he left more or leſs in repoſe, thoſe which had no part there. He obſerved the convenience and character of each figure. He knew that a virtuous perſon ought to ſhow moderation; that a philoſopher or an apoſtle has not to move like a ſoldier; and laſtly, by theſe means he knew how to diſcover the ſimplicity of the mind, devotion, and the internal and external paſsions. I call internal paſsions thoſe which in painting ought to be expreſſed by little parts, and by the moſt active members; as the eyes, the forehead, the noſe, the mouth, the fingers, and all the extremities in which reſide the firſt motions of all the paſsions; ſince their exceſs admits not of moderation: then when they move the whole of the body, I call them exteriors. Raphael was very attentive not to make the actions terminate; that is, ſuch as it happens when a man can do nothing elſe. For example, when a man walks, if he has terminated a ſtep, he has nothing more to do but to begin it again; and this poſture in a painting will not produce ſo animated an effect as another repreſented in the act of not having finiſhed his ſtep, becauſe the imagination of the ſpectator is occupied in fancying that the figure is going to finiſh it, and ſtill conceives, that he cannot remain there as he would imagine if the action were compleat. A perſon who throws, receives,

or gives a thing, will have a better effect in painting than another who has already thrown, given, or received a thing; becauſe then the action is already finiſhed, and the figure remains without occupation.

Raphael poſſeſſed alſo that occult fineſſe in general little known to painters; that is, an admirable eaſe and apparent negligence, which is ſo difficult to acquire; as alſo the art of hiding with ability a member, ſuch as a hand, foot, &c. He hid thoſe things not becauſe he knew not how to make them well, but from the motive of not ſhowing idle parts, which might take from the principal ones ſome beauty, and ſometimes he hid ſome parts only to avoid their ugly form, which would have been the neceſſary reſult in that determinate place.

Some people will be ſurpriſed perhaps, that I prefer Raphael in Compoſition tó all other painters. I ſhall adduce my reaſons in order that any one might judge me by comparing my ideas with truth.

Compoſition is in general of two kinds. That of Raphael is the expreſsive; and in this Puſsin and Dominichino might alſo be found in their place. The ſecond regarded only the effect, that is, he directed his principal attention to fill agreeably with figures a large painting. Of this kind Lanfranco was an inventor, and Peter of Cortona a great promoter. Between the two they have left to poſterity great examples of ſuch taſte, which pleaſe much the eye of many, but have a cold effect on the intelligent.

I have therefore preferred Raphael to all the others, becauſe he did every thing with reaſon. He never deſcended to low ideas, nor prodigalized the ſame Beauty in the acceſſories, when they could diſtract the attention from the principal figure. Puſsin often ran into the contrary effect; as might be proved in his famous Adultreſs, becauſe it would be a very ordinary painting if one were to take away the acceſſary parts. His Chriſt is rather badly made; and being able to make of the accuſers a group of people of conſideration, and to repreſent Chriſt as a divine Judge, one ſees that his principal attention is placed in the moſt indifferent perſons of the painting. In Pyrrus the ground, and the figures moſt diſtant on the other ſide of the river, are the things moſt beautiful: ſuch alſo are the ſoldiers in the foreground, on account of the Gladiator which is there repeated. The women are very ordinary. Puſsin neglected in general, the principal things; and the epiſodes of his compoſition, are the only things to be admired in his paintings. He had not the elevated ideas of Raphael. He affected erudition, and gives ſuſpicion of having compoſed ſome paintings expreſsly to ſhow that which he had ſeen or read in the ancients. He was leſs noble, and leſs graceful than Raphael: when he aſpired to nobleneſs he was cold; and when he wiſhed to be graceful he became trifling and ordinary. His Aſſuerus has the ſame coldneſs; Eſther is beautiful, but a ſtatue; the group of ſervants which ſupport her have too much ſymmetry; and

are as of a finiſhed action. The figures in the flank appear as if they had learnt their motions as ſoldiers learn their exerciſe. In fine Puſsin is excellent in the expreſsion of ordinary figures, and of low and violent characters. His grounds are beautiful, and all his excellence conſiſts in what one might call the œconomy of painting; that is, in imagining well the place where the action ought to ſucceed, and where the perſons ought to be placed, regarding little the compoſition of them.

Dominichino had much Expreſsion, and Deſign; and theſe were all his capital. But the expreſsion which he gave to all his heads one knows not how to conceive of what kind it be, unleſs it might ariſe from an air of timidity which he applied to them right or wrong; ſo that it is a ſtyle of his own, rather than expreſsion. This ſtyle is ſuitable only for children who have little force and variety; and in theſe Dominichino had much merit. In the other figures he was cold, and wanted variety. Many of his ideas were low and ordinary; he often produced repetitions, and had favorite ſubjects which he repeated continually. One might finally ſay, that to have made a compoſition perfectly expreſsive, it would have been of advantage for Raphael to have compoſed the figures, Puſsin the ground and the attributes, and Dominichino the children: therefore every one will accord to Raphael the moſt excellent and principal part.

As much as the firſt kind of Compoſition is

ſuperior to the other which I have called the effect, ſo much is Raphael ſuperior to the other painters who have adopted this effect; becauſe to theſe the principal and moſt eſſential part of painting is wanting, which is Truth. They do not intereſt or occupy the minds of ſpectators, and in every ſubject they repreſent the figures and characters always the ſame. Such kind of paintings cannot produce any good or moral effect, which is the end of expreſsion in painting, and which without pain, but rather with delight, ought to teach virtue, and make it glow in our hearts.

Some people might ſay that MECHANICAL Painters, ſuch as Lanfranco and Cortona, cannot ſubject themſelves to exact truth, becauſe the fire of compoſition tranſports them beyond the limits of ſcrupulous exactneſs; but every one muſt know there is not leſs obligation to obſerve Truth in a compoſition of a hundred figures than in one of ten. This reaſon cannot excuſe any painter with people of good ſenſe: the more ſo, as I ſpeak here of invention, and not of effect, which belongs to Clare obſcure; from whence it ariſes that Raphael did not poſſeſs all the Ideal required; but with all that no painter has made larger paintings, or more replete with figures. In the whole he has known how to diſpoſe wonderfully his groups; and he has collected them well; each figure in particular is that which it ought to be, and all are according to the moſt preciſe Truth. What other excuſe then can the MACCHINISTI alledge for their ſtyle?

I ſhall here ſlightly advertiſe that one ought not to judge of Raphael after any print but thoſe which he gave to be executed by his diſciples. That great man did as men of wiſdom ought to do, who after having diſpoſed their inventions confuſedly, apply themſelves to clear each group, and particular figure. repaſsing the compoſition many times, and in different deſigns. This does not ariſe from want of talent; quite the contrary: it ariſes from that judgment which is difficult to be ſatisfied. Happy is the painter who in every work improves, learns, and finds in his genius new reſources, to make always a laſting progreſs in the art!

CHAP. V.

OF THE IDEAL BEAUTY OF RAPHAEL.

By the Ideal I mean that which one ſees only n the imagination, and not with the eyes; from vhich the Ideal in painting conſiſts in the choice of beautiful things in nature, free of every imperfection.

In all the parts of painting enters the Ideal. n deſign the Ideal is ſupernatural Beauty, produced by reuniting various beautiful parts, greeing with each other. In Clare obſcure it

is the maſs, and accidents choſen purpoſely to augment the beauty of a work. In colouring it is the election of the tone which one gives to the things one repreſents, and the uſe of colours more or leſs ſtrong, and moſt proper to receive the rays of light; the choice and the employment of each thing with ſecurity and art; as alſo the general tone of harmony which one gives to a painting, forms the Ideal in colouring. The Ideal in compoſition, conſiſts in imagining an action not ſeen; in giving expreſsions which one cannot copy from nature; and in uſing accidents and poetical ideas. Laſtly the Ideal enters into the characters of the figures which one has to repreſent; ſuch as in the poſture; in the hair of the head; in the motions of the hands; in the movements of the feet; and in the geſtures of all the body; according to the temperament one would wiſh to give them in order that they may produce more effect and variety in the painting.

There is nothing ſingular in my placing in the Ideal of Compoſition the character of the form, although that appears to regard Deſign.

The Ideal embraces two parts. The firſt is to think of a thing and to adapt it to its place: this belongs to Compoſition. The ſecond is the Execution; and this is proper to Deſign; in which one ought to be aware that all the lines have the ſame character.

It behoves me alſo to ſay, that the Ideal has likewiſe acceſs in the compoſition of Dra-

pery; ſince to repreſent a man running ſwiftly, it is neceſſary, (copying nature,) to make the cloaths fly to one ſide; and when it is proper to do it in any other manner, is neceſſary to uſe the Ideal. If, for example, an Angel flies, it is neceſſary to ſhow by the drapery if he aſcends or deſcends; and in each member, and in all the figure, to make known by the folds, if he be truly in action, or if he has accompliſhed it; if the motion be placid, ſtrong, or violent, and if it be the beginning or the end of the action: in fine, I believe the Ideal ought to enter even in the hair.

To conceive and know what is this Ideal, and to what end it extends, I adviſe painters chiefly to read the poets, who have written nothing without having firſt imagined it, and thoſe who have known how to chooſe the beſt of their ideas are the moſt excellent. So that in no art does the Ideal ſo much appear as in Poetry, and Painting, when they are managed by a great genius; and for that reaſon the Ancients ſtiled Painting dumb Poetry, and Poetry a ſpeaking Picture. But we will now return to Raphael.

Raphael uſed not the Ideal in painting, except in the natural parts; but he availed of it much in the execution of the characters which he wiſhed to repreſent. One cannot oppoſe to that the beauty with which he did the head of his Madonna, becauſe this ariſes from the beauty of the expreſsion. Raphael made viſible in her modeſty, nobleneſs, chaſtity, and love towards her divine child; but whoever has a fineneſs of

taſte will agree, that if the daughter of Niobe were of a ſimilar expreſsion, it would by much ſurpaſs the Virgin of Raphael; and it would appear, that the laſt had painted a Queen with all grace and nobleneſs; and the ancient artiſt a Divinity, and the mother of God.

Raphael changed and improved Nature with regard to Expreſsion, but he left it as he found it with regard to Beauty; and ſometimes one could alſo imagine better the objects. He generally gave to his figures a very pleaſing air, which ſhowed their virtue; but they are always human perſons. His Chriſt is no more than a man, if one compares him to Jove or Apollo. His Fathers Eternal might be found in nature, and perhaps even more beautiful than them. In order for his figures to appear divine, he ſhould have given to his heads more air of Majeſty, and ſhould leſs have ſhown thoſe parts which denote mortality. A wrinkled ſkin, and torbid eyes ſhow the weakneſs of nature. What impropriety, to repreſent the Creator of all things ſubject to human miſery! Since the cuſtom has prevailed of repreſenting him under the figure of an old man, it is neceſſary to make him in a manner in which appears the venerableneſs of age, but without its imperfections, and that it fills the imagination with the grand idea which we ought to have of the omnipotent; but to produce that, it is not neceſſary to attend ſo much to truth as Raphael has done, who has

depicted him with all the miſeries of an old man.

The Grecians were excellent in the Ideal part. When they repreſented the figures of the Gods, they neither ſhowed the veins or the tendons, or at leaſt they did not mark them as in men; and if in the Hercules ſuch things are viſible, every one knows that it ought to be thus. Whilſt that hero was ſuppoſed living and repoſing after his fatigue, he was not a God, for ſuppoſing ſuch, he would not have been fatigued; and in the ſyſtem of Paganiſm, there was a great difference between the Gods and Heroes, or Demigods. Laſtly, the aforeſaid manner of repreſenting Divinity one might ſee in the Apollo, and in the Jove, which are in the Vatican Muſeum.

Alſo in the harmony, and in the accordance of the forms, the ancients are much ſuperior to Raphael. He knew, for example, how he ought to make the forehead ſerene or torbid; penſive or chearful, &c. but he knew not what noſe or cheeks would go well with that forehead. When the ancients made a ſmooth and ſerene forehead, they made alſo the noſe ſquare, and the cheeks of the ſame form and character.

Laſtly, the particular character of the ancients is, that by one part of the face, one might know the character of the whole. Raphael has not this advantage, as one might take a noſe from any of his faces, and ſubſtitute another, without cauſing any diſſonance. His Virgins have all a ſerene forehead, be-

lieving thus to manifeſt nobleneſs and baſhfulneſs.

The ſame is in the heads of the children of Niobe. Raphael made this by means of Expreſsion, and not of Beauty, becauſe if he had known the beautiful Ideal, he would have united to that forehead, a noſe of moderate contour, and not ſo overcharged as he has made it; but as he had only Expreſsion in view, he neglected almoſt all the reſt. He made the cheeks of the ſaid images round, in order to give his Virgins a youthful air, but that does not accord with Truth, becauſe a perſon who has fleſhy cheeks, has always the forehead divided in various parts by the volume of the muſcles. The ſtyle of the ancients is not thus: all the parts accord with them. The mouths of the Virgins of Raphael have all a little inclination to laughter, thus to denote love, and the innocence of youth; but this does not agree with true Beauty. The ſame one might ſay of the Expreſsion of modeſty which he gives to the eyes.

From all this I infer, that Raphael was not Ideal in Beauty, but only in the execution of Expreſsion. He who is little ſatisfied with my reaſonings let him tell me, why Raphael made not his Angels as beautiful as they ought to be? becauſe being purely Ideal figures, the imagination of the painter had a field to diſplay as much Beauty as he liked. He muſt likewiſe tell me why he did not paint Venus and the Graces, in the Taſte of the ancients, or in ſome other which at leaſt approached it? When he had not any

ſtrong expreſsion to paint, he was a pure imitator of Nature, nor knew what was Ideal Beauty. From which I think I may be able to conclude, that Raphael had exquiſite Taſte, little idea in Deſign, in Colouring leſs, and in Clare Obſcure none. In general in Compoſition he had much of the Ideal; alſo in Expreſsion, and likewiſe much Beauty. From which one might deduce, how much he ought to be praiſed in Compoſition, Expreſsion, and in the ſymmetry of the bodies of certain kinds of figures; and one might alſo deduce, that his Taſte in Deſign was excellent, and that he has opened the way to beautiful drapery, although very little varied.

PART THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

OF THE TASTE OF CORREGGIO.

CORREGGIO, like all the other Painters of his time, began with little Taſte, and was ſervily attached to nature, but he freed himſelf from it ſooner than all the reſt. Some pretend that he knew not the Antiques, but that is contradicted by ſome of his figures of women, compoſed to reſemble the Venus of Medicis. Beſides that, Andrew Mantegna, his maſter, was ſo great an admirer of antiquity, that his rivals ſaid, he did ill not to finiſh his paintings of one ſole grey colour, becauſe thus they would at leaſt have appeared of the ancient basrelief. This is a falſe criticiſm, becauſe Mantegna had not either the Grace, Beauty, or Taſte of the ancients; but ſolely deſired to imitate them. Then if Correggio learnt to paint of Montegna, which is very probable, as his firſt paint-

ings partake ſomething of his Taſte, although a little more oft, it is not therefore probable, that he was ignorant of the ancients, being the diſciple of a partizan ſo ſtrenuous in antiquity.

It is alſo commonly ſaid, that Correggio was never at Rome, but others maintain the contrary, and pretend further, that from a painting which was in the ancient church of the Holy Apoſtles at Rome, he took the idea for painting the Cupola at Parma. The truth is, that of theſe things we know nothing for certain, and the ſame might he ſaid of a thouſand other ſtories which are told of him, all full of contradictions.

As for what regards his Taſte, I return to ſay, that he was very dry and ſteril, although he took his figures from Nature. But preſently he ſaw that it was not ſufficient to imitate Nature wholly, but that it was neceſſary to ſelect the good from the bad, in order that the imitation might become pleaſing. Thus it happens, that his paintings had not ſufficient force to imitate Nature in all its extenſions, and he found it was neceſſary not to imitate Nature, but its effects.

From theſe reflections he changed his Taſte to another more ſweet; and conſidering that the ſole rotundity of parts do not conſtitute true imitation, and that it was neceſſary to break off that rotundity by varying the forms, he diſcovered a new taſte of Deſign, almoſt unknown before him. He began therefore to practice that drapery which gives ſuch elegance to his paintings. To this practice aided alſo the contours of the objects of his own country, becauſe the perſons of

Lombardy are as the figures which he painted. He advanced always perfectionating, in order to give the higheſt force to his paintings, and formed a Taſte ſo original, that no one ſince has been able to imitate him.

The Caracci's have endeavoured to follow his ſteps: they have followed him, but not imitated him. Lewis Caracci was too harſh and uniform. Annibal varied little the form; and where Correggio made the contours waving, he made them circular, and never convex. I ſay nothing of the colouring, becauſe never have the Caracci's remained famous in this: they were always opaque.

In ſhort, Correggio and Raphael have been little imitated, becauſe they poſſeſſed the moſt tranſcendent parts of the art. Raphael was eminent in the Ideal of Compoſition, and Correggio in Clare Obſcure, and one part of colouring. We ſhall now proceed to examine the parts moſt intereſting in Painting, and begin with Deſign.

CHAP. II.

OF THE DESIGN OF CORREGGIO.

THE firſt taſte of the Deſign of Correggio, was, as I have ſaid, dry, ſervile, and rectilinial. He executed, like the inventors of the art, what by force of his proper genius he found in Nature itſelf, diſcovering by little and little the variety of the contours. Appearances make me believe that Correggio had ſeen the antiques and endeavoured to imitate them. If he had not ſeen them as one ſees them at Rome, he might have ſeen them, as one ſees them at Parma, that is, in little quantity and not very excellent; but to a great genius it is ſufficient to ſhow the pattern of a thing to give an idea of what the piece might be. I hazard this conjecture, becauſe one does not ſee any work of Correggio intermediate with his dry ſtyle, and his grand Taſte; ſome cauſes therefore, muſt have led him to a ſtride ſo rapid. A piece of antiquity could make in his mind the ſame impreſsion, which the works of Michael Angelo did in Raphael; but this effect could not happen without a favourable internal diſpoſition; becauſe exterior objects ſerve only, as one may ſay, to put in fermentation, the principles which are held inert and without exerciſe.

It is not extraordinary, if we know but little of the life of Correggio, becauſe all his hiſtorians deſcribe him as a moſt timid character. It might be that he was at Rome, but was known only to few perſons, which happens to many young painters; otherwiſe it would be neceſſary to ſuppoſe that he ſtudied with incredible fatigue ſome piece of antiquity, or that he took his beautiful Taſte of Deſigning, and his great ſtyle by ſeeking variety in different forms, and in clare obſcure. Deſiring always to break off the contours by clare obſcure, and to vary continually the tints, he diſcovered not to be able to perform it with ſtraight and ſimple contours, becauſe if the exterior form be ſuch, the interior cannot be waved. In his firſt ſtyle he found that difficulty, and it has therefore no reſemblance to thoſe contours of his grand ſtyle, which are all waved, that is, compoſed of curved, concave, or convex lines, and if there be any ſtraight line one ſcarce perceives it.

The effect which theſe curved lines produce, is the invaluable grace which ſtamps the ſovereign character of Correggio. The convex line engrandiſes, and the concave gives legerity. The ancients diſpoſed in their contours of more lines and angles than Correggio, becauſe they compoſed with ſtraight, convex, concave, and angular lines, and Correggio uſed only the two oppoſite ones, concave and convex. For that reaſon, he is ſometimes affected, vulgar, and common; which ariſes from having uſed the convex in place of the ſtraight line, and the

concave in place of the angular. This is the cauſe why he had not the nervous Taſte of Raphael, or the nobleneſs and characteriſtic of the ancients. Nevertheleſs, the Deſign of Correggio is not ſo deſpicable as ſome people believe, becauſe at leaſt it has one principal part of perfection, which is the Ideal, in which conſiſts grace.

CHAP. III.

OF THE CLARE OBSCURE OF CORREGGIO.

In this ſo important article of the art, Correggio arrived to the ſummit of eminence; and I am ſurpriſed, that painters are ſo blind, that they do not praiſe him more in that, than in colouring, which is not his beſt part.

If they would ſtudy their profeſsion, they would comprehend preſently, that the force of that great man is in the rotundity, and truth of the Clare Obſcure, and if we were to take away that he would remain inferior to Giorgioni, Titian or Vandyke; but the grace which reſults from his rotundity, and always varied taſte, oblige one to confeſs, that if he has not painted man perfect, he has produced figures the moſt graceful in the world,

In my opinion, Correggio has ſurpaſſed all other Painters in Clare Obſcure. Raphael as I have ſaid in his place, arrived not to give to his figures the the ſame effect of Nature, and for that reaſon he failed much in the truth of that part. Truth in painting is that which is ſubſiſting and effective, and is not ſubject to contradictions, and differs not from the thing itſelf. According to Truth nature never preſents different objects with the ſame force, and in that Correggio was more intelligent than in any other thing, and executed it with perfection.

The different poſtures, and ſituations of the body make different effects of light; and the ſame form of the parts vary the accidents, becauſe a rotund object gives a luminous point, and a plain one light itſelf; and that made Correggio conceive that he ought not to give to different things an equal force, or form of light; that the internal clearneſs of a painting is different according as the parts become illuminated from the interpoſed air; and that the miſt of light and darkneſs produces a grey tint; and laſtly he knew that a continued variety was neceſſary, and that therefore one ſhould never repeat the ſame force either in the Clare or the Obſcure.

One obſerves in Correggio another quality, which increaſes much the beauty of his works, and which is, his having known how to give to each ſhade the tone correſpondent to its colour. For example, in his paintings one diſtinguiſhes very well the ſhade of a cloth of roſe colour from a red cloth, and a white ſkin from the ſhade of a

brown. To give force to a fair complexion he uſed ſhade, but to the ſame ſhade he gave reflections of light; and when he had to uſe the moſt perfect white, he oppoſed another colo ure; thus he gave diſtinction to things without ever employing affected contradictions; ſo that he never illuminated an obſcure matter to make it ſerve as a clear ground to the ſhade of a clear matter. In ſhort he left every colour to its degree and dignity.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE COLOURING OF CORREGGIO.

Correggio had a very good colouring, but not very delicate or refined. The ground is generally brown like the people of his country. His fleſh appears too ſolid, which ariſes from his colours being yelloviſh, rediſh, and greeniſh in the half tint. In nature, fat makes the palid colour; fleſh the red; humidity the blueiſh; colour; and upon thoſe effects Correggio made not ſufficient obſervations; ſo that his figures appear of too rough a ſkin, as if beſmeared with greaſe. His ſhades are too uniform and monotonous, and partake a little of the brown colour. Of the reſt he choſe well the grounds of

the drapery, and admirably conferved the graduations of the flefh. He did not equal the vivacity of Titian; the foftnefs of the pencil of Giorgione, or the delicacy of Vandyke, but he was great in painting women and children. In general he was fufficiently harmonious; although his colours in the figures of men were too fmooth.

CHAP. V.

OF THE COMPOSITION OF CORREGIO.

CORREGGIO had for the models of his compofitions things very little intereſting, and for that reaſon he diſplayed no truly beautiful invention. In the beginning, his inventions tended more to effect than expreſſion; although he always had a little more of expreſſion in his lively fubjects, than in his ſerious ones.

He characteriſed well the affections of love, although with little variety in the figures; ſo that little difference paſſed between the heads of his Madonnas and thoſe of his Venus's and Nymphs. He accommodated ſufficiently well his groups, but all his paintings appear done to explain the beautiful maſs of Clare obſcure, rather than the natural expreſſion of the ſub-

ject. His foreſhortenings were admirable; and I believe that he formed models of wax for all the figures of his Hiſtories, and by ſuch means he compoſed all his foreſhortenings; and to this end one might reduce all the rules of his compoſition; becauſe except that, all is dream, or imagination very remote from ideal Beauty. He abhorred in ſuch a manner things ſtraight or direct, that he ſcarce made a head which was not either bent or raiſed.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE IDEAL OF CORREGGIO.

Correggio was Ideal in that part of Deſign which reſpects the elegance of the contours. For what regards clare obſcure one might diſpute it, becauſe he who produces things according to nature will not appear to be Ideal; notwithſtanding that, I maintain that he was ſo, becauſe it is of advantage to have a great imagination in forming maxims and certain rules; and to execute them conſtantly, it is neceſſary to fix them forcibly in the mind; for as Raphael ſaid, to make a thing beautiful it is neceſſary to have in the idea a model ſtill more beautiful; and this is what is called Ideal Beauty. One

cannot deny that it is a great thing, and a proof of much merit, to know how to make in an art ſo difficult, things which produce effects more pleaſing than Nature itſelf; ſince that ſhows all the objects individually, and diſpoſed by means of the infinite degrees of clare obſcure and colouring, which things cannot be imitated exactly by painting. Becauſe if Nature, for example, diſcovers any little ſpot or fold in the ſhade, we ſee the ſame thing ſtill more diſtinct in the light, by reaſon that here the ſhade is true ſhade, and in painting it is only an obſcure colour; and it is neceſſary that a painting be illuminated in order to be ſeen. Natural light has ſpendor in itſelf, and in painting it is nothing more than a clear colour. To view a painting it ought to be placed in a manner not reſplendant, that it may not have the ſame effect of light; otherwiſe one ſhould not be able to diſtinguiſh any thing. For this reaſon it is neceſſary that in the execution, the painter ſhould avail of certain rules, and certain ratiocinations, which are merely ideal, making the things which are in the ſhade, more obſcure than thoſe which are in the light, but not by that has he to pretend to make it equal to Truth; that is impoſsible; becauſe art not having ſuch degrees of variety as nature, it ought to work only by compariſon; that is to ſay, feigning a light of whatſoever degree: it ought to make the ſecond tint of a degree more obſcure than in nature, and thus the painting will appear true. If then one were to place the half-

tint as it really is in nature, it would certainly want the neceſſary colour to imitate light.

Being thus proved that Correggio obſerved all theſe rules to perfection, I believe that he merits the title of an Ideal and ſublime painter in the part of Clare Obſcure. For what regards colouring, he has not been the imitator of Nature, except in the part of drapery, which he knew how to chooſe according to the neceſſary maſs. He knew alſo perfectly the force and degree of colouring, in order to revive or weaken that which he thought agreed with the compoſition. He had enough of the Ideal for certain intricate figures, but that is Ideal in effect, and not in fundament. In ſhort Correggio ſubjected all the parts of painting to the election of beautiful effect, and Clare Obſcure, and all the beauty which he had beſides is derived from that principle.

PART THE FOURTH.

CHAP. I.

OF THE TASTE OF TITIAN.

TITIAN began to ſtudy painting in the School of Giovanni, and of Gentil Bellino; but one finds no work of his done after that taſte; from whence I believe that he applied himſelf to copy only ſome paintings of thoſe profeſſors to make his ſtudies apart. Alſo Giorgione was at the ſame ſchool; but ſurpaſſed his maſters quicker than Titian did, becauſe it appears to me that his talent was much the ſame as that of Correggio, and he found by the ſame way a beautiful clare obſcure, and a taſte more raiſed and powerful than that of Bellini. Titian ſeeing that, abandoned his maſters, and put himſelf to ſtudy with Giorgione, taking from him force, ſweetneſs, and rotundity; but generally ſpeaking he could not equal him in the grandeur of Taſte. Yet notwithſtanding, in the Veſ-

try of the Church DELLA SALUTE at Venice, there is a beautiful painting by Titian, of a colouring more brilliant than thoſe of Giorgione, or even any others of his own works. In ſhort, he then knew how to agrandize his ſtile, and to improve his taſte, as well in the form as in the Colouring; although he made ſome of his works admirable, and others worth nothing.

One might almoſt ſay that Vice was a Virtue in the Venitian School, ſince it made pomp of ſolicitude in painting; and for that reaſon it eſteemed Tintoretti, who had no other merit. From whence it ariſes that in that ſchool there were few deſigners; becauſe to deſign well, requires much patience, and much reflection, in order to meditate each part and combine the whole together. Titian, although he knew how to deſign well, ran frequently into the vice of diſpatching quickly; but for all that he is ſuperior in deſign to all the other Venitian painters; becauſe he had wiſdom, and patience, to paint almoſt always from nature: however without fatiguing himſelf to ſtudy the reaſons, he contented himſelf with only the effects. By theſe means he acquired an admirable colouring, which is the part in which he ſurmounted above all others in his beſt time. Towards the laſt years of his life, from weakneſs of age, he changed his ſtyle, and produced a Taſte low and trivial, preſerving notwithſtanding a general good tone of colouring.

Many times he was harſh, becauſe he wiſhed to diſpatch quickly. His beſt works are to be

ſeen at Venice, and among other paintings there is a beautiful Venus in the houſe of Graſsi, deſigned and painted in his beſt time; but his beſt painting is Saint Peter the Martyr, in which he ſhows great deſign and colouring, and appears there to have ſurpaſſed himſelf. All his parts are ſtudied from nature, without the appearance of the art with which they are done; and they are painted with ſuch boldneſs, that they appear as done from idea.

In general Titian did not finiſh much his paintings. But with the little he did, he expreſſed as much as Correggio with all his attention and fatigue. In the laſt, however, all is as reaſon, and in the firſt excellent imitation of nature.

His drapery is light, and it has alſo the Ideal; but partakes of minutiæ and triteneſs. His fields are the moſt beautiful that I know; but the part in which he is ſo eminently ſuperior is, in colouring, and in certain bold ſtrokes, which would be uſeful to augment the beauty of Correggio. Laſtly, no one has known ſo well as him how to uſe the half tint of blood colour which has an effect as beautiful as Nature.

CHAP. II.

OF THE DESIGN OF TITIAN.

At the beginning, Titian was dry in his contours, from imitating his maſter. He then enlarged his taſte, by endeavouring to imitate nature; and laſtly, to give freedom to his pencil, he neglected Deſign, and gave into an ordinary and vulgar taſte. Notwithſtanding that, he has made his children more beautiful than any other painter; ſo much ſo, that Puſsin ſtudied him always in that and Fiammingo the moſt famous in that part, took his children from Titian.

There is no doubt of his having had the talent to become a great Deſigner; becauſe he poſſeſſed much exactneſs of ſight for imitating nature and antiquity, if he had wiſhed to have ſtudied it; but the tranſport of colouring left him no time to make this part a ſolid ſtudy; from whence I run no riſk in ſaying that Titian has been a good Deſigner.

CHAP. III.

OF THE COLOURING OF TITIAN.

UNFORTUNATELY we have ſo few paintings of Giorgione, that one can ſcarce conjecture ſufficient by them to judge of his abilities: we have however enough of Titian when he imitated him, not to doubt to which of the two we ought to attribute the merit of having taught poſterity the painting of drapery, and the uſe of colours. In ſhort, I attribute that invention to Titian, ſince one ſees in his paintings, that if he were not the inventor, he managed that art as if he had created it. He was the firſt after the reeſtabliſhment of painting, who knew how to profit advantageouſly of the ideal in different colours of drapery. Before him all the colours of drapery were uſed indifferently, and almoſt the whole were painted with the ſame degree of clare and obſcure. Titian and Giorgioni knew that red approximates things; that yellow attracts and retains the rays of light; that blue is ſhade, and is fit for making any thing very obſcure. They knew alſo the effects of rich colours, and further knew how to make advantage of all theſe obſervations. By ſuch means Titian found the true idea of beautiful colouring, and the manner of giving the ſame grace, clearneſs of tone,

and dignity of colour, to ſhade, and the half tints as to light.

And thus he knew how to diſtinguiſh with a quantity of half tints the tranſparent from the rough ſkin, and with the pure colours of yellow and black, he painted pinguidity, and finally, he arrived to ſignify with each tint, the true propriety of any thing; and knowing beſides that tranſparent colours were more indeciſive than the opaque, and that the light fixed in the one, and paſſed to the other, he acquired that eminent degree of colouring in which he has not had a competitor.

The Roman ſchool has never had the practice of good colouring. That of Lombardy has poſſeſſed it a little better; and the Venitian ſchool has been excellent in it.

This ariſes from practice. The Venitians exerciſed much the painting of portraits; which gave them the opportunity of learning the art from nature, and of ſtudying its great variety; becauſe thoſe who were, portrayed wiſhed to be painted in their own garments, and for that reaſon the Painter was obliged to imitate a great variety of things, ſuch as velvet, ſattin, ſilk, cloth, linen, gems, &c. and they left not that to be revived much by the genius of the artiſt, who they wiſhed to do it well, nor could excuſe him, if he did not perform it..

The amateurs ſeeing the things well imitated, accuſtomed themſelves to that taſte of painting; and to pleaſe them it was neceſſary that the painter ſhould make his portrait ſomeway ſtriking,

and that he ſhould alſo make it variouſly rich, in order that they might ſee the portraits as they were. In Rome where the ancient taſte predominates, they make little account of this variety, and endeavour to make things with the greateſt ſimplicity poſſible. The amateurs ſearch for the moſt heroical ſubjects, in which great variety is hurtful. From their infancy they learn theſe maxims, and accuſtom themſelves to a taſte of colouring which is not ſo various or ſo true as the Ideal and choſen ſtyle.

The Germans, Flemings, and Dutch, have had better colouring than the Romans. Rubens and Vandyke improved much their ſtyle by painting velvet and ſattin; and the firſt gave it ſuch ſtyle of reflections and accidents of light that he made the fleſh as relucent as the ſattin. He had ſtudied Titian, whoſe taſte was a little compatible with his own, but his colouring is admirable and various, nor has he ever forgotten the general harmony. Rubens knew not what this was, and when he wiſhed to practice it, he aſſembled only colours in a maſs, making one reflect upon the other, without obſerving that colours offend the ſight when they do not accord well with another. Behold a clear example.

The colours of the Irus have among them a good harmony; but if one takes away the red, the blue, or the yellow, the harmony is preſently deſtroyed. The ſame happens in a painting, in which is wanting ſome of the aforeſaid colours; and the reaſon is, that their true concordance conſiſts only in the equilibrium of the

three principal colours, red, blue, and yellow. Rubens placed in his paintings much of ſome of theſe three colours, but he knew not the equilibrium like Titian, who made all his paintings according to the rules of the moſt exact harmony, and for that reaſon he might be reputed the moſt perfect colouriſt that has ever been.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE CLARE OBSCURE OF TITIAN.

MANY have pretended, that Titian invented a kind of particular Clare Obſcure, which they ſay to be that which gives to his paintings the admirable effect which they have; but theſe deceive themſelves in the ſame manner of others who make Correggio the beſt colouriſt. The generality of people in praiſing Titian ſay, that his figures appear of a living fleſh, and in the ſame confeſs the excellence of his colouring. To paſs encomiums on Correggio, they likewiſe ſay, that one might almoſt paſs one's hand between the objects of his painting. And what has that to with colouring? This one might do in a deſign, and the other upon the palate of colours. The peculiarity which Titian has in his Clare Ob-

ſcure, ariſes ſolely from his colouring; for knowing that ſhades loſe the quality of their colours, and render them dark, he knew how to give them the tone which they ought to have, and by his knowledge in colouring, he made ſomething of good in Clare Obſcure. He likewiſe beſtowed great attention in the imitation of nature, which he copied regularly; and ſince nature is ſo various, the ſame variety is to be found in his works; but he did not ſtudy it by the ſame principles of Correggio: he contented himſelf wholely by imitating it as he ſaw it, without adding any thing of the Ideal.

Theſe my propoſitions are not to be taken rigouroufly, as if I would pretend to make Titian totally ignorant of Clare Obſcure, and Correggio of Colouring; my intention is only to compare the merits of theſe great artiſts, and to diſcover the parts in which each has remained excellent; becauſe in an art ſo extenſive, as painting it is not poſsible that one ſole limited underſtanding can embrace the whole in the ſame degree of perfection.

From whence, by all that which I have ſaid, I do not mean that the aforeſaid great painters were ignorant of any of the eſſential parts of the art; I mean only that each had ſome part in which he excelled more than in another.

Raphael for inſtance will appear to be arrived to the higheſt point of perfection in deſign, to him who does not conſider the beautiful ancient ſtatues which are ſuperior to him. He who has not ſuffieient inſtruction will ſometimes pre-

fer the Clare Obſcure of Titian to that of Correggio; but as I ought to underſtand theſe things they could not perſuade me in the ſame way.

CHAP. V.

OF THE IDEAL OF TITIAN.

TITIAN had very little Ideal in deſign. In clare obſcure he had ſufficient to underſtand nature; not however as much as Correggio, becauſe his clare obſcure is not ſo abundant and general. In colouring he was much more Ideal, by having well known the characters and degrees of each colour, as alſo the proper place in which to apply them. The ſcience of placing a red cloth in preference to a blue one, &c. is not ſo eaſy as is imagined; and this is what Titian underſtood in the higheſt perfection. He likewiſe very well knew the harmony of colours, which is in part Ideal, and which one ſees not in nature if it be not firſt comprehended in the imagination. I ſay the ſame of clare obſcure; becauſe the degradation of light has not in painting the ſame force as in Nature: the ſame happens to harmony and colours, where pure imitation ſerves as nothing.

As Titian has remained ſo excellent in this part, one might conclude, that he had much of the Ideal. With regard to invention he was very ſimple, and in general he thought not of it more than was abſolutely neceſſary, and of courſe added nothing to it of the Ideal.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE COMPOSITION OF TITIAN.

His firſt Compoſitions were ſymmetrical, according to the manner of this time. His ſecond ſtyle was a little more eaſy, but without any particular rule. In his laſt it appears that he ſcarce thought of what he compoſed, although by chance one here finds ſome expreſſion. Many times he placed portraits in his paintings, and his compoſitions remained the more cold. If he compoſed any thing well, it was ſo rare as not to give him an habitual merit. Finally in this part he did no more than follow ſimple nature without obſerving the expreſſion of the art.

PART THE FIFTH.

CHAP. I.

OF THE TASTE OF THE ANCIENTS.

HISTORIANS relate many things of the invention of the art of deſigning, but examining it well, all is ſuch confuſion that it appears as if they knew nothing of the matter. I believe it is impoſsible to know the true origin of the arts, becauſe perhaps they have been invented at different times, and places, as has happened with printing, which invention is claimed by ſome cities of Europe, at the ſame time the Chineſe pretend to have known it many ages before. It might have happened, that deſigning was invented at the ſame time in Greece, Egypt, and in Tuſcany, or that ſome of theſe people had taken it from others; but there is no neceſsity for ſeeking this out, nor would the knowledge of it be of any conſiderable utility. For that reaſon I do not enter into this diſpute, leaving

men of erudition to examine if there have been two or more cities of the ſame name, and in which of theſe has been born ſuch an artiſt as has invented or perfected any point of the art. My object is to ſpeak ſolely of the ſtudy of the ancients, and of the way they have taken to invent painting and ſculpture; likewiſe of their Taſte, and of the maixms by which I figure to myſelf they have been operated.

I incline to believe that deſign was the firſt found by men, and that painting and ſculpture came after; that in the beginning they knew nothing of ſculpture, and that painting was begun ſtill later: that the firſt deſigns were the imitation of the human form: that in ſculpture they began by forming earthly figures; and that this was the firſt ſtep which the arts approached towards the imitation of nature; becauſe of a thing which one ſees at all ſides it is more eaſy to expreſs the form than even in deſign, which requires more reflection, and for that reaſon has leſs of mechaniſm than ſculpture. However it may be, I do not hazard to decide upon that point; only I am perſuaded that the ancients began the art of deſigning with forms very ſimple, long and ſtraight, after the manner of the figures, which we ſee in the Tuſcan Vaſes.

I imagine that Philoſophy, and the other ornaments of the mind, flouriſhed among the ancients before they cultivated ſculpture and painting, and that for this reaſon they purſued a way totally different from the moderns; that is to ſay, they followed the direction of reaſon,

and not of practice and caprice; becauſe we ſee they preferred the moſt neceſsary things to thoſe which were leſs ſo; from whence they directed their firſt attention to the muſcles, and the next to proportion, conſiſting in theſe two parts the moſt uſeful and neceſſary of the human form; and this is the character of their primitive Taſte. All this one obſerves in hiſtories and in the divine and human figures which they have repreſented, and one knows equally that thoſe who applied themſelves to the art of deſigning, were not ignorant people who worked only mechanically: they had likewiſe reaſon for their guide. We ſee that their vaſes are of an admirable form, and are executed with the higheſt delicacy and art; which was not to be done without much reflection and great ſtudy. In theſe figures one finds a proportion, impoſsible to be known and practiſed without an art which gives ſecure rules. Theſe rules could not be founded otherwiſe than in proportion, which was invented and practiſed by the Greeks, who knew it from the beginning, taking it ſimply from the beautiful Nature of their time and country; and if they had accuſtomed themſelves to work in that part without rule, like the moderns, they would have made (at leaſt from error) ſome heads varied and different: but we ſee there is a proportion obſerved in the whole.

In the ſecond epoch they began to know that this uniformity of rule produced a dry and mechanical Taſte; therefore they agrandized

their ſtyle by giving to their figures an air of nobleneſs, which could not paſs for magnificence. They extended the members more than they had done before: they conſerved however the ſtraight lines, and thus fell into a taſte rather heavy, although not of bad ſtyle, becauſe the dryneſs of the firſt being abandoned, this was of courſe by that much better. Of this ſecond ſtyle we ſee ſome Tuſcan ſtatues as, for example, the Tuſcan Amazon, which is rough and heavy, but notwithſtanding of good character. One might infer that the Greeks of that Epoch followed the ſame track, as far as we can learn from the few monuments which have remained of that time. Their foreheads are flat; their noſes ſquared, their brows much marked, and and their lips cut almoſt ſtraight. All this proves what I aſſert, and one might ſee it confirmed among other ſtatues in the MINERVA MEDICA, of the palace of Giuſtiniani, whoſe ſimplicity of contours makes me believe that it was a work of that ſecond epoch.

The ſtatutes compoſing the group of the fable of Niobe appear to me to imitate others done when the taſte of Greece was a little more refined. The proportions are of the beſt perfection; the forms are ſublime, and appear of great beauty, but they want notwithſtanding a certain ſoftneſs which was not known till times much poſterior to that. On account of their lines being too ſtraight they make too many angles. In ſhort they want that ſublime elegance, and that contour ſo perfectly varied, which

one admires in other Grecian ſtatues; ſuch as in the Apollo, the Gladiator, the Venus, and in the Ganymede. I conjecture that the aforeſaid ſtatues of Niobe were anterior to Alexander the Great, becauſe they have not beautiful drapery, and becauſe one diſcovers that their authors thought only of avoiding the dryneſs of the firſt ſtyle, and the heavineſs of the ſecond.

In the time of Alexander, or a little after, they arrived to the higheſt perfection in the art, by giving more motion to their contours, and by taking from the ſtone that rudeneſs occaſioned by uniform lines and angles. In a word, the able ſculptors began to ſtudy the fleſh. It was then that ſculpture ceaſed to be an imperfect art, and became united to the true imitation of Nature.

I take it upon me to ſay that ſculpture owes this laſt effort to painting, becauſe before the progreſs which it made in the School of Pamphilus it was not arrived to true perfection. Then appeared Apelles his diſciple, who fixed the attention and taſte of his age, by aboliſhing minutiæ and dryneſs. He ſaid of other painters, that each was excellent in ſome part, but that GRACE was properly his, and that he knew how much he had to give to compleat a work. He did not ſay this to ſhow that he was fond of negligence but to ſhow that he knew how to omit things which ought to be omitted; and that if other painters poſſeſſed ſome parts of perfection, he poſſeſſed the union of the whole.

I have ſaid this in order to explain better my propoſition, becauſe I believe that when ſculptors ſaw the elegance and grace of the works of Apelles and his contemporaries, they opened their eyes, and introduced in their Art that admirable taſte which has produced ſuch prodigies of beauty. Painting likewiſe then acquired more reputation, becauſe Philip, father of Alexander, made a law in conſideration of Pamphilus, ordering that painting ſhould not be taught to any but free perſons, which in his time ſignified Nobles. From that, Painters became to be more eſteemed; and the great fortunes which they acquired ſupplied their wants to perfect this beautiful profeſsion, which until then was rather rare, and ſculpture was more common.

Until the time of Alexander, the arts always continued increaſing, and afterwards; although they were very much extended, yet nothing was added to their perfection. This age reſembled that of Raphael, in the which one ſees on a ſudden ſuch beautiful productions, as neither before or after the revival of the Arts were ever more to be ſeen; and although afterwards have been found the methods to improve ſome parts, yet there have been none, who, upon the whole, have been able to equal the great men of that time.

From the age of Alexander even to the diſtruction of the Arts with the Grecian Empire, they always went on acquiring ſome new ornament, but in the trifling and uſeleſs parts; whilſt the ancients of the good time applied themſelves

only to the principal parts, without regarding to ſtudy the fineneſs of the hair, or ſuch like minuteneſs, being engaged only to perfect the imitation of the naked; nor in general did they loſe ſo much time in the drapery as we do.

It is certain that in times poſterior to the liberty of Greece, there have been ſome ſculptors who in part have equalled the great men of Antiquity; and ſometimes in the ſoft, and fleſhy taſte have ſurpaſſed them; yet notwithſtanding they will never compare with the firſt, becauſe they have not had imaginations ſo ſublime, or ideas ſo elevated as had the Artiſts of that happy age, when opulence and liberty fired their talents, and nouriſhed their ideas excellent and divine.

As the Empire encreaſed, the Arts of Greece came to Rome; but I know not how much they flouriſhed there, not finding one good ſtatue with the name of a Latin Author. Perhaps the Roman Artiſts, like many moderns, affected to put their names in a learned language. Who knows that? I however incline to believe that that Nation did not cultivate the Arts to ſuch a degree as to be able to leave us monuments of admiration. We have a great number of ſtatues which we believe to be of Roman Taſte; or at leaſt if they were found in Greece, they did not merit the trouble of being conveyed to Rome. But in the major part of them one diſtinguiſhes, the character of the nation by the heads, and the greater part of the buſts, under the effegies of Gladiators and Soldiers; beſides

that, their ſtyle is harſh, which one ſees in all their portraits, and particularly in thoſe which were done in the times neareſt to the beautiful taſte of Greece, which are thoſe of Ceſar, Auguſtus, and alſo of the Anterior Conſuls. In ſhort even to the time of Nero the Arts ſhone little in Rome; and when they flouriſhed more in the time of Trajan and Adrian, I believe that the good artiſts were all Grecians, as one ſees by their ſtyle, which even in its weakneſs preſerved ſtill the good maxims of antiquity, that is to ſay, ſimplicity of the contours, totallity of the proportions, and the beautiful characters of the heads.

The Sicilians had alſo the Grecian good taſte, and preſerv'd it for a long time, without however touching perfection, becauſe they were leſs correct than the Grecians, and more rotund and loaded, nor ever arrived to work marble with the ſame fineneſs and poliſh.

Antiquarians have erred in ſearching perfection where it cannot be, which is, in engraved ſtones. That which they could profit themſelves by in this was only in the ſtyle with which they were executed. The authors could, there only diſcover beauty in that which was eaſy, and in avoiding difficulty, by which they would have fallen into Error.

But returning to the works of the Romans, I maintain that their monuments which have remained, and which we know to have been much eſteemed in their time, are not executed with the higheſt finiſh, and all their art is reduced to a beautiful and noble facility. The deca-

dence of the Art in Rome might have ariſen from the multitude of Artiſts, who by being very common fell into diſrepute, and from their not eſteeming in the moſt flouriſhing time of Rome any other profeſsion than that of a Soldier, of conſequence the profeſsors of Deſigning being little reſpected, became to ſtudy little, and to treat their art as a kind of mechanical and vile trade, worthy only of ſlaves and miſerable people; and in this manner it decayed even to total ruin, being deſtroyed by the revolutions of the Empire, the wars, invaſions of the Barbarians, change of religion, and by aboliſhing of the Images; thus they gave the laſt ſtab to good taſte, and deſtroyed the beautiful things left by the Ancients.

Yet, notwithſtanding the world owes to the Greeks of that miſerable and oppreſſed Country, the preſervation of the Arts, and the revival of them; becauſe they tranſported for the ſecond time painting into Italy, and there it began anew to be cultivated and improved by the Florentines, Venitians, and by the people of Lombardy, even to Raphael, Titian, and Correggio, who carried it to the higheſt degree of perfection, and from which point, it returned anew to fall into decay even to the preſent time, and we ſhall ſee its entire ruin if we proceed on the way hitherto continued. This is in ſhort what I think of the invention, progreſs, and decline of the Arts. Now I ſhall ſpeak of their beauty, and particularly of that which I have obſerved in the firſt, ſecond, and third epoch of Antiquity.

In the beginning there was but one Taſte only, which was deformed and vulgar. The Egyptians fixed it there, nor ever improved it, becauſe the nature of their country was not capable of ſuſtaining their ideas of perfection, either in beauty, or proportion.

The Grecians, and the Tuſcans, were the firſt who diſcovered the proportions. They ſoon knew that a part which was ſupported by another ought to be lighter than that which ſupported it. From thence they inferred, that if a hand, a foot, or a head was very large it was deformed; they reflected that every body ought to have the property and capacity of performing all its motions with facility, and that every motion is exerciſed by the joints, and therefore they applied themſelves to obſerve that the neck unites the arms, as alſo the thigh the legs, and to theſe the feet and toes; and reflecting on the manner of the force and graduation, and of the actions and motions of theſe parts, they acquired the idea of the legerity and eaſe which one obſerves in the Tuſcan figures. They knew that the force of the poſture of a figure began from below, and roſe gradually, becauſe the foot ſuſtains the leg, that the thigh upon which is placed the trunk; and thus philoſophiſing upon it, they found that there ought to be a certain proportion between the length and thickneſs of theſe parts. Then proceeding further they found, that in all the members of the body, there were two contrary movements, one of action, and the other of re-

poſe; that is, the force which operates, and that which ſuſtains; and that to ſignify the firſt, eaſe and legerity in the extremities, were neceſſary, and that for the ſecond they ought to be more ſolid and robuſt, and of courſe they made the extremity a little longer; but ſince thickneſs of parts can degenerate into heavineſs, they proved that true eaſe was derived from the proportion of the members with the joints, and thus they ſaw the neceſsity of making long folds, as effectually one ſees in all the beſt ancient ſtatues of that time, and by applying all theſe obſervations to that which they ſaw in the beautiful nature of their country, they eſtabliſhed rules grounded upon reaſon.

From this I am of opinion that we owe the knowledge of beautiful proportion to the beſt artiſts of the firſt epoch of the art. In the ſecond they conſerved all the proportions of length which were firſt eſtabliſhed; but having ſeen that that taſte was too dry and ordinary, they began to change it by making the joints ſomething ſtraighter, and ſhorter, with which they introduced alſo more grandeur and ſoftneſs.

With all that they found not the mode of intirely correcting their dryneſs, becauſe by avoiding the ſtraight lines, they mixed with them the convex, and knew not how to wave them.

The works which we have of that epoch, appear as if they were ſtrangled in their birth, becauſe where they found two convex lines they formed an angle of great profundity, and by that this

ſtyle appears to be cut off in the beginning. This uſe of convex lines was not however abſolute, or general, becauſe they only ſerved to combine the ſtraight lines, the one for the things which incline outwards, and the other for thoſe which incline inwards. I mean to ſay that where the entrance ought to be more powerful, there they placed a curve more rapid; and where they wiſhed to extend much, there they lengthened the ſtraight line. This was taken from the firſt ſtyle, and one ſees it clearly in the characters which they gave to the heads, and in which they formed a ſtraight line from the root of the hair even to the point of the noſe. They lowered the little parts to exalt the great ones, ſubjecting themſelves only to the general forms. This one might obſerve in the heads of Jove, the aforeſaid Minerva, and in others of that time, where the artiſts have uſed much the ſtraight lines and angles, and have been attentive to the principal parts, omitting the leſſer ones. They made the forehead plain: from the root of the hair, as I have ſaid, even to the point of the noſe, all is a direct line. The ſuperior ſurface is all plain, and from thence to the upper lip it forms a direct angle. The two ſides are alſo plain, and the noſtrils are ſcarely marked, not to interrupt the principal form, which they compoſed of two lateral triangles, and one plain upon the ſuperior part; nor did they mark the bone of the noſtrils: from that, even to the moſt prominant part of the upper lip they made another plain,

almoſt as long as that of the noſe, which gives a certain air of gravity and nobility. I believe they would have made alſo the under lip of the ſame form, if nature had not made it ſo different; becauſe I ſee that they endeavoured to accommodate it to their taſte, by making the aſcent from the chin to the mouth almoſt a ſtraight line, and at the higheſt part of the lip, they repeated the ſame flatneſs. To the chin they alſo gave the ſame flat form; to the cheeks the ſame, except where the bones of the face play; and in this way all the other parts, by expreſsing the great, uniform, and ſimple, and omitting the ſmall parts; and from all that they eſtabliſhed fixed rules which they never departed from, and thus they formed the ſecond degree of perfection, or epoch of Taſte.

In the third, or beſt time of the art, the ancients perfected their ſtyle; being convinced, that in the two preceding they did not duly expreſs the effect of the fleſh; becauſe in the firſt it appeared too nervous, and in the ſecond much ſwelled and vulgar: and laſtly, they knew that in beautiful nature was to be found continued variety; that nothing ought to be repeated; that it was neceſſary to paſs from the convex line to the concave and ſtraight line, and make a mixture between them: that in the plain and angular parts of the ſecond ſtyle, it was neceſſary to unite the concave with the convex, and where variety was wanting, all the three ſpecies of lines ought to appear; and they found the reaſon why one ought not to make any

angle without a curve, and no curve without interruption or inflexion; that is, without waved or ſerpentine lines. They remarked that no contraction ought to be oppoſed by others ſimilar, or no extention contrary to another; that no line ought to be of the ſame proportion or character as the oppoſite of the other part; and laſtly, that there ought to be a continued variety in all the contours and proportions.

Theſe rules could not conduce to the error of artiſts, being founded on the good practice of of the ſtyle preceding; becauſe the firſt had explained the good proportions, and the ſecond had baniſhed all minutiæ, and uſeleſs parts; the third did not tend to any other than to arrive to the accompliſhment of the art, which conſiſts in variety, and which is the ſoul of things; becauſe variety produces in our ſight the effect which nature makes in motion; and a ſole form makes a ſole effect, by taking away the idea of motion; whilſt many and various forms take away the conſiderations of the durability, and ſtability of things. A ſingle line upon paper does not attract our attention, but many, if they have a certain proportion, fix one to contemplate them with delight: the ſame happens with a beautiful painting, or with a beautiful ſtatue, which the more one reviews it, the more the eye comprehends the variety of the forms, and finds more pleaſure in it, appearing more animated. A uniform thing to the contrary, does not move the ſight, but appears dead; and our genius finding in it nothing

new, is ſoon tired and diſguſted with it. It is this variety which characteriſes the excellent works of the ancients, and gives them that beauty ſo difficult to be acquired. This variety conſtitutes all the difference that there is between the ancients and the moderns. Not that the laſt have not endeavoured to give variety to their works, but they have made it too ſenſible and ſtudied; and by force of wiſhing to add much, they have become deficient, and have been conſtrained to make repetitions. The ancients divided the paſſage of the ſtraight line to the moſt curved, for example, in a hundred degrees; and they availed of this in a manner almoſt inviſible: the moderns begin by a ſpring, placing, as one might ſay the firſt degree at number 50, from whence they cannot have ſuch variety as the ancients, not having but half of the degrees and the forms.

This is but a general inſinuation of the many I could give upon the Taſte of the ancients. Now it remains with me to ſpeak of their painting in particular, comparing it at the ſame time with ſculpture, and conſidering it by the degrees and parts which that art requires; and I will ſay what I think that they knew, and that which they were ignorant of. I will not forget however that I examine the works of men, and that human nature is compatible with defects.

Since we cannot think of two things at a time, our actions are all ſeparate and ſucceſsive; the memory is that which unites them; ſo that when a

man loſes that power, he looſes the whole; becauſe human knowledge is no more than a combination of things. For that reaſon it is ſo difficult in the beginning of a work to have preſent all the parts, and to remember at the end, that which one thought at the beginning, to combine the whole. This makes painting and ſculpture ſo difficult, requiring, both the one and the other, thought and execution. The firſt, nevertheleſs, has in that ſome advantage over the ſecond; becauſe a ſculptor, to put in execution all his ideas, is in want of many manual operations to ſtrengthen the genius, which becomes otherwiſe debilitated, and cools before the hand can terminate the execution of the thing conceived.

The painter, by a little ſtroke of the pencil, which is almoſt as quick as thought, can manifeſt his idea. The ſculptor performs his work by degrees, nor can give it beauty ſo quick as the painter, becauſe that which in the one is the laſt thing, is in the other the firſt; that is to ſay, perfection of the form as painting begins by the contours, which is the end and completion of Sculpture. Nevertheleſs, modern painters have not been able to approach the perfection of ancient ſculpture; and the reaſon I believe is, becauſe the cuſtoms of our time are different, and the painter has occaſion to explain quickly, and to expoſe his paintings much ſooner than he ought to do. If Raphael had wiſhed to expreſs all the perfection of which he was capable, he would not have left perhaps

more than one painting in place of the many which he painted during his ſhort life.

In Sculpture one finds alſo this reaſoning, becauſe we have not been able to arrive to the perfection of the ancients, notwithſtanding we know how to work the marble as well as them; and it is becauſe the beginners are conſtrained to work to gain their livelihood; and the amateurs who give them work know not how to diſtinguiſh for what good uſe or end a ſtatue is made, and they order works of him who is alſo in the neceſsity of ſtudying the mode of making it. Theſe accuſtom themſelves thus to pure practice, and to that falſe brilliancy, which is the delight of the wealthy, who are generally ſpeaking the moſt ignorant. Thus no more ſtatues are made by the order of Philoſophers, or an entire city, but for the ſimple caprice of a powerful fool for whom a bad ſculptor is better than a good one. In ancient times one beautiful ſtatue only was ſufficient to ſecure the reputation and fortune of an Artiſt; but at preſent fifty bad ones are not ſufficient to give him bread to eat; and as perfection in Sculpture is ſeen more at the end than at the beginning our Sculptors are conſtrained to leave their works imperfect; and thus men habituating themſelves to vice and evil with ſuch facility, it reſults that the ſight of the ſame profeſſors accuſtom itſelf to a depraved Taſte in our days.

From all that I conclude that the moderns for various reaſons are inferior to the ancients,

and that the ſculpture of our time is alſo inferior to painting. They finiſh the laſt at preſent too haſtily, without conſideration, and without ſcience; and ſculpture firſt without good rules of proportions, and without intelligence in the end; whilſt the ancients uſed in the beginning the beſt proportions, and afterwards the lines moſt proper to noble expreſsion, rejecting ſuperfluity and minuteneſs, and finally perfecting all with reaſoned variety.

The ancient painters did the ſame by different means. They kept their works long in hand to increaſe by degrees their perfection. They began by exactneſs of the proportions, and by the principal forms of the contours, carrying on the conſideration in the great and little parts, even to the utmoſt delicacy. We read in hiſtory, that no perſon was found ſo hardy as to undertake to finiſh the Venus which Apelles left at his death incomplete; not becauſe others knew not how to make an arm or a leg, but becauſe that painting, although only ſketched, appeared finiſhed to him who knew not as much as Apelles.

Painting was at that time an Art which was learnt and exerciſed as a ſcience. They began by dividing the lines in ten parts for example, then in twenty, then forty, eighty, &c.; and with that delicacy and repartition of lines they gave infinite variety to their works. They varied the ſame parts of their lines, making for inſtance one of three, another of five, and another of two, ſo that they formed the contours varied, but united in the different lines; and from all that ariſes

their perfection. They did not obſerve theſe rules only in the contours, but applied them alſo to the interior forms, to the extremities of light, and to the points of greater force. He who knows how to view the ancients with this attention, will not be ſurpriſed that Protogenes employed ſo many years to paint the ſole figure of his Jaliſus, becauſe he who like him would obſerve ſo many rules and reaſons, will be obliged to ſtudy much and to contemplate his work many times, part by part; ſo that as I have ſaid before, the reaſon which hinders a painter from giving perfection to his works is the want of memory; and the Ancients knowing that, afforded themſelves time: and neither would this reſource have been ſufficient for them if they had not known how to reduce things to the method of dividing the art in principal and little parts, and how to execute them by degrees one after another, and for that reaſon they could not acquire the great variety which they employed in their works without long time and patience, and this variety gave the finiſh and perfection to their proportions.

Thus end the general maxims of the ancients. I ſhall now proceed to the particular rules which they uſed in deſign, compoſition, colouring, and in the Ideal.

CHAP. II.

OF THE DESIGN OF THE ANCIENTS.

I HAVE ſaid that the ancients had three different ſtyles or manners; that is to ſay, the dry, the great, and the beautiful; but I ſhall ſpeak ſolely of the laſt, which is the only one worthy of being imitated.

To examine it I ſhall take four of the moſt famous ſtatues; the Apollo for elegance and eaſe, the Laocoon for the choleric kind, the Hercules for the robuſt, and the Gladiator for ſimplicity; adding the Torſo of Belvedere for the ſublime, becauſe in this the Ideal is united with Beauty and Truth.

In the Apollo one ſees expreſsion, nobleneſs, and all the other attributes of perfection; but for the preſent, I ſhall ſpeak only of Deſign. Viewing therefore this ſtatue with the reflections which we have made upon the difference between Painting and Sculpture, we ſhall find elegance, union, harmony of contours, and a predominant character ſo perfectly executed, that there is no difference in the character of one contour and that of another; nor that of one form or another, from the greateſt even to the leaſt extremity of a toe. When I ſay that the forms are uniform, I mean that if a convex form is great, all the forms of the figure ought to be

convex alſo; and the ſame I mean by the concave and the ſtraight line; and ſince all the lines of the contours are compoſed of theſe three, there can be no other difference between theſe contours than that of the character which they give them. For example the Apollo is compoſed all of very ſoft convex lines, of obtuſe angles ſufficiently ſmall, and of plains, but ſtill the ſmooth convex is moſt prevalent. As the character of this divine figure ought to expreſs force, nobleneſs, and delicacy, its Author has repreſented the firſt by convex contours; the ſecond by their uniformity, and the third by waved lines. The obtuſe angles and light inflexions form the waved line, and by their union diſcover the ſufficient force and nobleneſs.

In the Laocoon the convex lines govern, and the forms are angular as much when they ware contracted as when they are diſtended, by which means one marks the alteration there is in the expreſsion, ſo that in this manner one renders more viſible the nerves and the tendors of the figure, which are ſtrongly ſtrained. The ſtraight lines meeting with the concave and convex, form the angles by which one diſcovers that the figure is altered.

The Sculptor of the Hercules imagined a Taſte entirely different, becauſe he made the muſcles of a convex and rotund form, in order to ſhow that it was real fleſh, but he made the contractions plain to ſhow alſo that they were nervous and thin parts, and by that expreſſed the character of force and robuſtneſs. This is more vi-

ſible when confronted with the modern legs which have been applied to him, and which the ſculptor has made of muſcles ſo hard and ſo ſtrained, that they appear not fleſh, but cords.

The Gladiator evinces a mixture of the form of the Hercules, and the Laocoon, becauſe the muſcles, which are in action, are altered, and thoſe which are in repoſe are ſhort and round, like thoſe of Hercules. This variety is conformable to Nature.

The Torſo of Belvidere is a work merely Ideal. Here we find reunited all the beauty of the other ſtatues, becauſe it has a variety ſo perfect that it is almoſt imperceptible. One cannot diſcern its flat parts but by comparing them with thoſe rotund: and thus vice verſa. There are fewer angles than plains and curves, nor would theſe be diſtinguiſhable if they had not the little areas of which they were compoſed. This famous Athenian author would, in my opinion have obtained the moſt beautiful taſte that imagination could aſpire to, if he had been as perfect in the parts deficient as in thoſe which we ſee. Yet I do not confide in myſelf ſufficient to aſſure it, ſince I know other ſtatues which have ſome parts excellent and are very ordinary in the reſt. The name of that Appollonius is not to be found in ancient hiſtory, if it be not him who was never content with his works, and after having finiſhed them always deſtroyed them. Notwithſtanding that, I believe that the ancients made a great account of that ſtatue, becauſe by the iron clamps which it has in the hinder part, one knows that it has been repaired. It ap-

pears that it repreſented an Hercules, as it indicates the tail of a Lion; and according to the character it muſt repreſent that hero as already deified; becauſe one does not diſtinguiſh in the body any of thoſe veins which the ancients marked in their human figures; as the cave vein of the interior of the thigh, that of the lower belly, and others which paſs by the breaſt. By this I incline to believe that he was leaning upon his club, and not ſpinning, as ſome pretend. This digreſsion upon ſculpture is not out of rule, becauſe treating of deſign, ariſes from that art the contours, and forms which are equally neceſſary in painting.

Returning then to painting, I am entirely perſuaded, that the deſign of the ancient painters was much more perfect than that of the Sculptors. Firſt for the elegance and readineſs, which I have already ſaid to be greater in the execution of painting than in ſculpture; and ſecondly by reaſon of the eſteem in which the famous painters were held more than the ſculptors: nor might that be without a ſtrong motive, treating of judges ſo enlightened, and of taſtes ſo exquiſite as were among the Greeks.

The expreſsions uſed by hiſtorians as encomiums to the merit, and delicacy of ancient painters appear as hyperboles, and incredible to him who does not combine things well. There have been moderns, who in reading the memoirs of the marvellous abilities with which ſome painters expreſſed the character of people of Athens, have imagined that it was by means of Hieroglyc-

phics and emblems, and by force of expreſsion and deſign; which would be repugnant to the truth of the Hiſtory.

What is certain is, that we do not ſee theſe delicate expreſsions in their ſtatues; from whence I believe that the painting of the ancients ſurpaſſed by much their ſculpture. The grace and beauty of an Helen, and of a Venus of Apelles, could not be the effect of any thing elſe but an admirable excellence of the contours. It appears clear that the celebrated diſpute between Apelles and Protogenes was only a difference about the contours, according to the mode which I have before explained; that is to ſay, the firſt delineated a contour of a divided member in three forms; the ſecond ſhowed that he could give greater variety by dividing it into four; and Apelles ſtill added another new line, giving the very laſt variety and perfection to the ſame contour. If it had not been thus, it would not have been poſsible that this diſputed line could have merited ſuch attention, and the regard of men of ſo learned and refined a Taſte as the Hiſtorians certify.

The ancients certainly knew foreſhortening, otherwiſe it was not poſsible that Apelles could have been able to paint Alexander in the figure of thundering Jove with the thunderbolt in his hand which is raiſed, in a manner that they ſay it appears to come forth from the painting.

Neither could the paintings of battles have been executed without the knowledge of foreſhortening, becauſe the figures would have ap-

peared lame and ridiculous.* In ſhort I think the deſign of the ancients was much ſuperior to that of the moderns; becauſe among the ancient paintings that I have ſeen, many are as well deſigned as the beſt of Raphael, notwithſtanding they were done at Rome in the times when the Grecian taſte was a little vaniſhed; and nevertheleſs the ſculpture of the ſame time was much inferior to the aforeſaid paintings; ſo that by the little which remains of ancient painting, one might infer that it was always more perfect than the contemporary ſculpture.

CHAP. III.

OF THE CLARE OBSCURE OF THE ANCIENTS.

I am of opinion that the ancients had not ſo juſt an idea of Clare Obſcure as we have; and that they poſſeſſed that part which requires

* This point remains definitively decided if one is advertised of that which Pliny relates of Pausias libro xxxv. cap. 11: ANTE OMNIA CUM LONGITUDINEM BOVIS OSTENDERE VELLET, ADVERSUM EUM PINXIT, NON TRANSVERSUM, UNDE ET ABUNDE INTELLIGITUR AMPLITUDO.

imitation, and not the Ideal. To deceive the imagination of ſpectators with an effect of Truth, cannot be obtained without a true Clare Obſcure, which the ancients certainly had; but for that it is not neceſſary to poſſeſs the ideal: it is ſufficient to be exact in imitating nature.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE COLOURING OF THE ANCIENTS.

We find in hiſtory, that among the ancients were to be found good and bad colouriſts, which happens among the moderns. Zeuxis, and Apelles ought to have been brilliant in that part, according to what is related of them; and by the colouring to which thoſe authors refer, it proves that the ancients had a juſt idea of it; but perhaps they did not arrive to analize that point as much as us. The choice of the colouring of their drapery was very good, according to what we ſee by the relics which remain of them. They painted in a very finiſhed ſtyle, without omitting any thing neceſſary. We have the figure of triumphant Rome painted (as is ſuppoſed) in the time of Conſtantine, which has a

very good tone of colouring, and although it is a painting rather ill deſigned, one ſees that it is not ſo bad by far as the ſculpture of the arch of that Emperor, executed in his time. . . . .

The remainder is wanting.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Robt Weir

The Works

OF

Anthony Raphael Mengs

First Painter to his Catholic Majesty

CHARLES III.

Translated from the Italian

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ERRATA.

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Page 10 for "their" read "its"
17 for "Tarqiuins" read "Tarquins"
18 for "Adiran" read "Adrian"
29 for "Fauns elegant forms" read "Fauni of elegant forms
50 for "renders" read "render"
54 for "guages" read "languages"
61 for "prtend" read "pretend"
66 for "takes" read "take"
67 for "woks" read "works"
68 for "Spaniards" read "Spaniard"
85 for "which likewise" read "which are likewise
87 for "manne" read "manner"
ib for "or" read "of"
95 for "shows" read "show"
106 for "see" read "seeing"
ib. for "the" read "they"
112 for "arts" read art"
120 for "anciencs" read "ancients"
124 for "pass more" read "pass for more"
135 for "Titan" read "Titian"

III.

5 for "heart" read "hearts"
120 for "lbuish" read "blueish"
125 for "it" read "its"
ib for "in beginning" read "in the beginning"
ib for "School" read "Schools"
134 for "ofuscates" read "offuscates"
141 for "that" read "that they"
147 for "a naked women" read "naked women"
158 for "its" read" their"
160 for "one Raphael" read "but Raphael"
162 for "that" read "those"

FRAGMENT

OF A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE MEANS

OF MAKING THE POLITE ARTS FLOURISH IN

SPAIN.

FRAGMENT

OF A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE MEANS

OF MAKING THE POLITE ARTS FLOURISH IN

SPAIN.

BEFORE I propoſe the means capable of making the polite arts flouriſh in Spain, I ought to examine, if the genius and character of that nation be adapted to that end, ſince there is no doubt but the diſpoſition of nations renders one more fit than another for the cultivation of different arts and ſciences. This national genius is not always conſtant, but is in part dependant on Nature, and part on cuſtom; and theſe two cauſes have ſuch influence between them, that one can ſcarcely diſtinguiſh to which belongs the moſt effect. We know by experience, that climate makes men differ from each other, and it is alſo certain, that cuſtoms and education render uſeful or uſeleſs,

the effects of Nature. It will be neceſſary therefore to examine theſe two principles, to know the influence they may have in the advancement of the polite arts in Spain.

This kingdom generally enjoys an air very pure and elaſtic, which gives much motion to the humours, and eaſily irritates the nervous ſyſtem. The dryneſs and aridity of the earth contributes alſo to this effect; and their great ſenſibility of fibre ought to produce talents very accute, and penetration capable of learning any thing whenever they would wiſh to take the trouble of ſtudying it. Sometimes this ſenſibility of the Spaniards is too exceſsive for the culture of the polite arts, which require a nervous ſyſtem rather moderate, and which comes produced naturally from a climate in the medium, between hot and cold, or humid and dry, which is that of Greece.

The men moſt adapted to make a progreſs in the arts, are thoſe who with the greateſt facility can diſtinguiſh beauty; which is not acquired without having very delicate ſenſes and an open mind; ſince beauty is a propriety in things, which by means of the ſenſes, give the underſtanding a clear idea of their good and pleaſing qualities. He who has not a delicacy of the ſenſes, cannot receive from objects that impreſsion; nor will his ideas occur ſo quick as is neceſſary to communicate to the mind the delight of beauty; this being ſometimes the only caſe in which the mind and the ſenſes have equal enjoyment. He who has read hiſtory will

know to what exceſs of pleaſure the Grecians were tranſported by the effects of beauty.

Our ſenſes are ſo weak, that we have never arrived to conceive, in what conſiſted the enthuſiaſm of that nation for the arts. But returning to my propoſition, I ſay, that although the Spaniſh nation is not ſo natural as Greece for the promotion of the arts, it has, however, the neceſſary quality, more than any other, to make greater progreſs in them; provided they would correct the inconveniences of cuſtoms, which are oppoſed to the good diſpoſition of phyſic.

Nations, as well as particular men, work according to the neceſsity which ariſes from cauſes natural and accidental. When this neceſsity exiſts for a length of time, the remedies which they apply will laſt in proportion, and will become cuſtomary. Theſe tirannize over the ſenſes and reaſon of thoſe who have habituated themſelves to them from their cradle, and except from ſome powerful force or motive, they never abandon them. The firſt inhabitants of Spain were barbarians, therefore barbarous ought to be their cuſtoms. The Romans who conquered this country, introduced there ſome cultivation, but their principal ſtudy was to dig gold and ſilver, vermillion, and other metals of their mines.

The Vandals and Goths then ſubdued this kingdom, and introduced there, their natural barbarity. Laſtly came the Moors to accompliſh the ruin of the few reliques which

the Romans had been able to leave. Then at laſt when after ſo much bloodſhed the Moors were entirely driven out of this country, their talents revived, and they applied themſelves with ardour to the improvement of the Belle Lettre, but no progreſs could they make in the arts, being deficient in every idea of beauty, the more becauſe continual war, and conſequent neceſsity had fixed the attention and honour of the Spaniards in arms and riches. From that it neceſſarily followed, that the little magnificence which the King and the Grandees wiſhed to employ in the temples and palaces were executed by ignorant and diſregarded people, and wanting other examples of good taſte, they dedicated themſelves to imitate the Gothic and Mooriſh. Thoſe who ordered ſuch works, were alſo more ignorant than the artiſts, becauſe they were in general people accuſtomed to arms, and to the ſtudy of juriſprudence, or theology; deſpiſers of every good taſte, and barbarians to the arts.

Spain appeared glorious under Ferdinand the Catholic; but that great King being diſtracted by the care of war and politics, did little to promote the polite arts. In his time the Indies opened their new treaſures, and thoſe riches attracted the attention of all the Spaniards. New reigns, new fortunes, and new hopes agitated their minds, and nothing but gold could merit their eſteem.

Charles the Fifth occupied the nation in new wars; and his valor and enterprize intoxicated

the Spaniards for military glory, nouriſhing that ferocity which is natural to war, and ſo contrary to that calm tranquility which the arts require.

Philip the Second, of character oppoſite to his father, was a declared lover of the arts. He undertook the magnificent work of the Eſcurial, and generouſly rewarded the artiſts; but the cuſtoms of that nation, or the conſtitution of the ſtate not having changed, the love of the arts concentered in him alone, without being communicated to the nobility, who continued to think as at firſt, only on arms and riches. He planted alſo the Eſcurial in a deſert, which could not for that reaſon be obſerved but by few; and finally it had the misfortune, that when the Spaniards began to cultivate the arts, and wiſhed to ſeek them anew, and to learn them from Italy, they had already begun in that country to fall from a good taſte; and therefore thoſe who came after that reign adopted that which was vitiated.

They began, notwithſtanding, to cultivate deſigning, and in Seville they formed a ſchool of painting, without being promoted or favoured by the government, but ſolely by the commerce and opulence of that city, which gave occaſion to the ingenious to occupy and advance themſelves.

The Sevilian painters, ſaw not however, nor ſtudied the examples of the ancient Grecians, nor knew not beauty in their works; by which reaſon they were pure imitators of nature, without knowing in the leaſt how to chooſe what

was beautiful. Nevertheleſs, they thought to have touched the ſummit of perfection, becauſe they poſſeſſed the moſt neceſſary parts of the art; but they were very diſtant from the moſt noble parts. They dedicated themſelves to follow truth, without regarding beauty; nor did they know the ſuperiority of the Italian ſchool at that time, which was revived almoſt a new by means of the Caracci's, when Italy had repoſed itſelf a little after its unhappy ſtate, in which it had been tormented by the wars of Charles the Fifth, and Francis the Firſt.

Philip the Fourth honoured painting much, in the perſon of Don James Velaſquez; but took not the good road to perfection, becauſe although he had got modelled ſome of the beſt ancient ſtatues at Rome, they were ſepulchred in the palace of Madrid, where no one knew or could profit himſelf by them.

Charles the Second thought of making great paintings in the Eſcurial, and at Madrid; but as none of his vaſſals knew the art of freſco, either for want of opportunity, or by the exerciſe directed to the ſimple ſtudy of imitation; he ſaw himſelf obliged to ſend to Italy for Lucas Giordano. The fortune, applauſe, and facility in the painting of that famous Neapolitan, led many Spaniards to imitate him: but as the ability of Giordano aroſe from practice, acquired by imitating the maſters of all the beſt Italian ſchools; the Spaniards deprived of theſe means, could not follow their intent; and the worſt was, that

ſeeking to follow Giordano they departed from the imitation of Truth, which they had purſued until then, without acquiring the part of the taſte of beauty which was preſerved in Italy.

From that time nothing elſe has been done but to propagate ignorance, by means of bad inſtruction, and one might almoſt compare Spain to a country of infirm people placing guards at their boundaries that no foreign phyſician may enter.

I have rapidly ran through the hiſtory of Spain, without touching on the other arts, becauſe painting ought to be the miſtreſs of good taſte. Of their architecture, I ſay only, that although it has been almoſt forgotten, even to our days, yet it was cultivated with good maxims by ſome profeſſors. It had ſcarce began to be removed from the Gothic ſtyle, when they built the Eſcurial, an immense and ſolid work, done on good principles of building, but without any idea of true beauty or elegance. It is an emblem of the character of the prince who conſtructed it. In ſpight of the multitude of artiſts employed in that great work, they extended very little the arts in the generality of the nation, probably becauſe they continued to think, that the great and the beautiful conſiſt only in riches; and from that ignorance we ſee produced, that monſtrous magnificence of altars of gilded wood, which cuſtom cancelled every idea of beauty in the form; recalling all the attention to the richneſs of the matter.

That unhappy maxim brought upon itſelf another, ſtill worſe of making ſtatues of wood, painted and gilded, with which they diſgraced ſculpture; becauſe in this manner, it is not the form of the ſtatue which gives an idea of their merit, but the colours, and the richneſs of it. It was impoſſible, that a people who had always before their eyes ſuch objects, could acquire a good taſte, becauſe this is not formed but by means of the habit which the ſenſes take, in ſeeing perfect things, and when they are not ſuch, they are at leaſt ſimple, and contain the mere neceſsity; becauſe although they appear ruſtic and poor, they will always be nearer to beauty than thoſe replete with unreaſonable ſuperfluity; and the reaſon and the ſenſes will have leſs fatigue to diſtinguiſh naked beauty, than when buried in a maſs of inutility. If to diſcover beauty, one meets this difficulty, much more difficult will it be to diſcover the ſublime, which is the mode of giving a clear idea and conception of a grand object, conjoining rapidly and with ſimplicity, the extremities of the beginning and end, and comprehending much, in the leaſt compaſs poſsible.

After having ſeen the difficulty which nature and cuſtoms oppoſe to the progreſs of the polite arts in Spain, it is neceſſary to find the remedies; and for that it will be uſeful to examine again the reaſons and accidents by means of which they have flouriſhed in other nations.

The power and faculty of man as a reaſonable being, are very great, but in general he does

not put them in practice except when he is obliged to it from neceſsity. This neceſsity is of two kinds; the abſolute and the optional. The polite arts have no relation with the firſt, but ſpring from the ſecond; for where there is power eaſily ariſes the will; and man being by his talent, and by his conformation capable of comprehending, and of imitating every property and external quality of things, imitation therefore becomes natural to him, and from this the arts have derived their birth. Some might deny that Architecture is the daughter of neceſsity, but he will then confound it with the art of building, which is not ſuſceptible of beauty, or can be the directreſs of the other arts as is architecture.

It is commonly believed, that in the Eaſt men firſt began to make Images and Idols for religious worſhip; but theſe nations did not exalt the arts to the points which merit the term of beautiful, becauſe they contented themſelves with the ſole ſignification of the thing: from whence an image was valued the ſame as a name or hieroglyphic, without either conſidering perfection or beauty; and thus they compoſed certain monſtrous figures, to ſignify different imaginary properties, or to make their Gods, frightful and horrible as their ſuperſtiton which conceived them. They were a little more exalted during the time of the Egyptians. The Phœnicians added a little more of finiſh to their works, becauſe they required this in their commerce, and they worked more metal than ſtone. Theſe, in my opinion, diſtributed the arts throughout

all the coafts of Afia, Africa, and Europe, but always in that ſtate of ruſticity and barbarity in which they remained until they were cultivated by the Greeks.

Examining why the arts made not great progreſs among their firſt inventors, although it is ſo eaſy to add to invention, I believe the cauſe has been, that the ideas of men go always in following progreſsions and of courſe if the beginning is bad, the end ought to be very bad, ſo that the polite arts among thoſe nations who began ill ought to be always worſe in continuation; and as the fruit of a bad tree muſt fall before it comes to maturity. To beginning ill might likewiſe contribute the deformity of the people, their ignorance of Beauty, and the diſeſteem which they had for the Artiſts; who beſides not being at liberty to abſtract themſelves from the form of the Idols, which the prieſts had preſcribed, contented themſelves, as I have ſaid, with the ſole ſignification of a thing, and when they wiſhed to make any thing particular they augumented the matter and not the form, making extraordinary and gigantic figures.

The Phœnicians on the other hand thought of nothing but their commerce, for which reaſon it was very natural that they ſhould range their artiſts in the claſs of Mechanics, who ſerved in a branch of their traffic.

When laſtly the Greeks began to compoſe a wiſe nation, and the Athenians particularly to flouriſh, andhad ſufficient philoſophy to give the true value to works of genius, then the arts

appeared in their greateſt ſplendor. Every one favoured them in Greece. The ſituation of ſo many iſlands which made nature ſo various and beautiful; the temperate climate, and the beauty of the inhabitants, the cuſtoms, the ſweet liberty, the greateſt eſteem which they had for beauty, and the ſenſaſions in thoſe minds ſo well organiſed, and even poverty itſelf concurred to to that happy combination. Merit opened the way to the higheſt honours, even to apotheoſis. They conſidered beauty as a gift of the gods. Men were more valued for that which they were, than what they poſſeſſed. And the ſtimulus above all to the artiſts was, to ſee that their judges were Philoſophers, and that the ſame who regulated the republic were of the proper claſs of artiſts themſelves, as happened to Phidias friend of Pericles, and to Socrates the ſculptor, and firſt of the ſeven wiſe men, and the oracle of all the world. We know well the immenſe riches of Phidias and the great premiums that were given to the celebrated painters and ſculptors. This principally conſiſted from almoſt all the works being executed at the public expence of ſome city; in conſequence of which, poverty inſtead of being a diſadvantage was uſeful, becauſe theſe people ſought not magnificence in the value of matter, but in the art of the profeſſor which they employed.

Although ſtatuary (undoubtedly the moſt ancients of the arts,) was very early known in Greece, it remained for a long time in a ſtyle ſomewhat dry, after the manner which we ſee in the Tuſ-

can Vaſes, which in truth are of the primitive Grecian taſte, becauſe the Tuſcan works in marble, or of alabaſter of Volterra, are of a different ſtyle. In fine the Tuſcans ought to have had that Grecian ſtyle, being a double colony, firſt of the Phœnicans and afterwards of the Greeks, as is proved by their monuments, becauſe except ſome obſcure points of mythology they contain no other but Grecian deeds, particularly of the times heroic.

This ſtyle was not general to all Greece, but ſolely where the Egyptians and Phœnicians introduced it, that is, by the coaſt of the ſea; but inland I believe they began much later to make idols, nor did they recieve the art from without, but invented it among themſelves, beginning from the PLASTICA.

The principal occaſion of the introduction of the arts, were the ſtatues which they erected to the conquerors at the Olympic Games. Theſe they did at the public expence of the country of the conquerors; from whence all their compatriots had intereſt that they ſhould be done as they would wiſh. The artiſts in drawing theſe ſubjects had opportunities of examining the beſt proportioned, and moſt beautiful bodies; and the glory of immortalizing themſelves by their works, united with the competence of others who expoſed themſelves in thoſe celebrated places, were potent ſtimulus's for the ſculptors, and gave facility to the amateurs to judge better of their merits by compariſon.

This firſt imitation of truth, gave a degree of

perfection to the art, becauſe the diverſity of the figures which they retraced, neceſſarily exited a ratiocination, and a diverſe manner; but the propenſities of thoſe people to beauty made them obſerve that youthful bodies had more of it than old ones, becauſe they did not contain ſo many ſigns of human imperfection, and that they comprehended all the eſſential parts without the minutiæ which fatigues the ſenſes and and reflection, and that they were of a form more ſimple and beautiful. By this, and with the cognition which they had already acquired by imitating the bodies moſt exerciſed, they knew which were the parts that moſt concurred to the perfection of man, and the different qualities which are characteriſtic to each; as for example, force, legerity, the great and little, youth and age. They diſtinguiſhed their characters in the moſt ſimple manner, and they found by that the moſt perfect ſtyle, or to ſay better, the ſtyle of Beauty. Their Deity was all beautiful, and although they repreſented him in a human figure, they avoided the ſigns of animal nature; and by that one ſees not in their Jove and Neptune either wrinkles or veins, notwithſtanding they repreſent perſons robuſt and aged. When they had to give any altered and ſtrong expeſſion, they never made it exceſſive, but in a manner moſt ſimple, and without altering the beauty more than that little which was neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the difference of another ſtate of the perſon, and to give a clear idea of the paſſions.

Since of the many things which man executes

all have a relation to himſelf, and nothing can delight him which has not ſome relation to his ſpecie, by that reaſon the Greeks applied themſelves ſo much to the ſtudy of the human figure, and they found in it all that which could appear beautiful to man, and ſince we have beſides the habit of comparing all things with ſome circumſtance of our own, they took from the proportion, reſt; and character of man the ideas for all the form, ſuch as for architecture, vaſes, or for any thing which has a form.

Painting perfected itſelf almoſt in the ſame time of ſculpture, which certainly commenced by the PLASTICA. With regard to the eſteem which they made of the one and the other, I believe painting held the greateſt, as well from the price of their works, as for the honours which they accorded to its profeſſors. Sculpture could not, in my opinion have, acquired its higheſt perfection until the time of Apelles, by means of Liſippus, and Praxiteles, becauſe it was neceſſary before them that the other artiſts ſhould conquer the greateſt difficulty in proportion, character, beauty, and majeſty; productions of men which operated all by reaſon, as one ſees by the monuments which ſtill remain of that time.

The Grecian architecture had no infancy; and from the cottages paſſed repeatedly to the ſumptuous edifices of the Doric order, which they always preſerved, receiving only little variety, becauſe they found not any thing better to accomodate themſelves to their ſolid manner of thinking.

Greece finally was conquered by the Romans, but although theſe conquered by force of arms yet they could never equal the Grecians in the arts and ſciences, whoſe genius forced the conquerors to declare themſelves conquered; ſo great is the force of merit, even with barbarians. The Romans had never great artiſts, becauſe they did not hold them in that eſteem which they merited, and becauſe the road to fortune, and public reputation in Rome was only by arms or war, and the people oppreſſed by the claſs of ſenators, thought little of the arts; from whence whenever they wiſhed to make any beautiful work, they went in ſearch of ſome Grecian to execute it.

Among theſe they preſerved the arts for a long time which went declining by little and by little; but among the Romans the taſte introduced by by the Grecians remained but a very little time, becauſe they debaſed the arts by employing even their ſlaves in them, and they became reputed as low artizans, and much inferior to the profeſsion of a ſoldier.

Some will believe perhaps that the Roman architecture ſurpaſſed the Grecian. I do not think ſo, becauſe I do not believe that the Romans had any architecture proper to themſelves.

One ſhould conſider what Rome was before the Tarquins. Tarquinius Priſcus made the circus, and the aqueduct, a magnificent undertaking, and certainly executed by the Tuſcans, who never invented any thing in architecture, but availed themſelves always of the ancient Greek,

however leſs perfect, and alſo ſomewhat altered. Then when the Romans acquired a little more culture, they employed the Grecian artiſts, as did Auguſtus, Trajan, and Adiran, who were thoſe who certainly built moſt in Rome.

The compoſed order which the Romans uſed, is not properly a new thing, but a mixture of the corinthian and the ionic. The firſt I dare ſay had not much credit among the Grecians, becauſe among the ruins yet exiſting in many parts one ſees not that order except in the ſame corinthian; from whence I believe that the uſe and the name of that order of architecture has been invented after the deſtruction of that celebrated city, and that the Romans having made ſome little capitals of corinthian metal, with the foliages and the figures as we ſee, this gave to them that name, ſince they called corinthians, candleſticks, and vaſes, made of that metal, and although the lantern of Diogenes, and the Tower of the winds of Athens were of the corinthian order, I believe they were built after that time.

The different ſtyle which one ſees between the Grecian and Roman buildings gives one to underſtand the diſtinct character of the two nations, becauſe the laſt by the pompous luxury of ornaments degraded the beauty of the Grecian ſimplicity, which did not admit any thing that was without reaſon, or againſt reaſon. The aforeſaid luxury which aroſe from the exorbitant opulence of the Romans, and the little ſenſation which they felt

from beauty, made their ſtyle ſoon fall into barbarity, becauſe ſucceeded ſoon by poverty, they loſt their taſte, by having loſt its ſupport. To the Greeks it did not happen thus: here the intire ruin of the nation was neceſſary to extingiſh in them their good taſte, becauſe with the loſs of liberty, and in their humiliation, they did not introduce barbarity until they embraced chriſtianiſm. Not that this holy religion is contrary to the arts, but it aroſe from the abuſe which the Greeks made of it by diſputing with fury, and dividing themſelves into various ſects: their ſublime genius's and natural ſubtilty o'erbounded the limits of a religion ſo pure and ſimple, and paſsed with too much rapidity from the love of matter to that of the ſpirit: they changed the ideas of things, and diſfigured their cuſtoms. To liberty ſucceeded obedience; to the love of glory, humility; to the eſteem of beauty deſpiſal of things terrestrial, and laſtly to human ſciences, Faith. For fear that the people ſhould return again into idolatry they deſtroyed all the ſtatues which were ſaved until then from the rapacity of the Romans, the wars, the incendiaries, and ruins. Every thing in ſhort changed its aſpect; but with all that they did not ceaſe to diſcover always the ſuperiority of the Grecian genius over that of other nations, in thoſe things which they did, although they no longer regarded the arts, which were hidden in forgetfulneſs, or at leaſt practiſed only by religious perſons, who in their ſyſtem did not aſpire to excellence. At laſt came the invaſion of the Turks, and the ſect

of Mahomet who with the ſcimeter and ignorance compleated the ruin of whatever was not to be found in the alcoran, and eſtabliſhed barbarity without hope of remedy.

The Greeks who in great numbers fled to the iſlands of Italy, and to the coaſt of the Adriatic, and the Mediterranean, drew with them ſome ruſtic painters, who knew ſcarcely any thing of their art, but ſince they were much more in practice, and more free than the Italians, they went running every where to paint images, which the chriſtian piety ordered them to do.

The moſt magnificent buildings which have been conſtructed in Italy after the diviſion of the eaſtern and weſtern empires, are the works of the Grecian architects, as is the church of Saint Mark at Venice, the tower of Piſa and others.

It is likewiſe worthy of conſideration, that the ſame accidents by which the polite arts were exalted from nothing in Greece, were the cauſe of their revival in Italy, although in an inferior degree; either becauſe that nation is leſs natural than Greece to the very delicate ſenſations of beauty, or from being reſorted to with principles more complicated; which takes from the ideas of ſimplicity, the only feeling by which our underſtanding prepares itſelf for the aforeſaid ſenſations of beauty.

Religion rendered neceſſary the art of building, ſculpture, and of painting images for divine worſhip. The liberty of the Italian republic inſpired the people to think of making great things, and to give birth to the idea, alrea-

dy exhauſted in Greece, and to diſtinguiſh themſelves by excellent works. Finally, this liberty, which revived in Italy in the 14th and 15th century, made human induſtry to flouriſh by the rule, THAT HE DOES MUCH MORE WHO DOES WHAT HE WISHES, THAN HE WHO DOES ONLY THAT WHICH HE OUGHT TO DO. A free man with inclination does all that he can, more or leſs according to his capacity, but a ſlave does only that which he is commanded to do, and his natural will is deſtroyed, by the violence it cauſes it to obey. The habit of obeying, at laſt oppreſſes his capacity, and his race will become worſe and worſe, ſo as no longer to deſire that which they deſpair of obtaining.

We ſee in fact that the polite arts began to flouriſh in Italy when liberty gave its impulſe to the republic of Venice. Its traffic and the continued communication with Greece, made them conceive ideas worthy of its greatneſs. . . .

LETTER

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS

TO

MONSIEUR FALCONET.

FRENCH SCULPTOR AT PETERSBURGH.

YOU will not be ſurpriſed, if a man who has not the honour of knowing you perſonally takes the liberty of writing to you: the quality of artiſts being common to both is a legitimate cauſe. Your name has been known to me many years; yet I have never had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing any of your works, and only by your writings does it ariſe, that you come to know of my exiſtence. I have deſired a long time, to know them, becauſe treating of the arts, I wiſhed to find in them, that which would give me inſtruction.

However, I have not been able to obtain that conſolation but imperfectly, during the few days that Mr. Zinowieff, Ruſsian miniſter at the court of Spain, did me the favour to lend me

only the ſecond volume, containing the tranſlation of the books of Pliny which treat of the arts.

Having opened it, I was ſtruck with the obſervations upon the ſtatue of Marcus Aurelius, which I read through. The work appeared to me to be well reaſoned, and written by a man of talent, who explains himſelf with energy, but at the ſame time (pardon my ſincerity) with too much acrimony.

Permit me to give my opinion of your judgment upon the ſtatue of Marcus Aurelius. I am well perſuaded, that your obſervations are well founded, but if you had ſeen the work in its place, and had at the ſame time obſerved all the other equeſtrian ſtatues exiſting in Italy, you would have wondered leſs at the praiſes given to that ſtatue, becauſe all the others, although they are more exact, appear in compariſon to it, cold and lifeleſs: I mean thoſe of the moſt able ſculptors, which exiſt in Venice and at Florence, becauſe thoſe of Piacenza, and of Rome, of Bernini and of the Cornachini, do not merit our conſideration.

No one inſtructed in the true ancient ſtyle of the art, will ſay, that in the time of Marcus Aurelius they executed works of the firſt taſte; from whence they gave that title to the horſe of Marcus Aurelius, only by compariſon of others; and you know very well, that the works which are admired by people of good taſte, are generally eſteemed, not becauſe they are without defects, but only becauſe they have ſomething extraordinary and ſignificant in them.

For that reaſon, the horſe of Marcus Aurelius enchants becauſe it has a certain animated expreſsion, and perhaps the ſame defect which you obſerve in the poſture of the leg, is that which gives him that emotion and admirable expreſsion, not being according to the ordinary mechaniſm, but in a momentaneous ſtate, in which an animal could not ſubſiſt but for an inſtant.

For that which regards the rider, he is not repreſented as a man who affects to ſit well on horſeback, but as an Emperor, who with an air of bounty extends the right hand in ſigns of peace to his people, according to the cuſtom of the ancients, and with the other guides the horſe.

I am not inſtructed as well as you in the motions of a horſe, becauſe I have not had an opportunity to ſtudy them particularly, but I conjecture what is the art of giving them a motion, by the cognition of that of man which I have ſtudied. I have known even in Rome itſelf ſome profeſſors who criticiſed the moſt claſſical ancient works, and copying Apollo in the Vatican, pretended to have corrected him by putting him upright, and preſently loſt the major part of the beauty of the original: but that is not my object at preſent.

The principal part of your work, which induces me to write to you, is that which you ſay of my friend Winkelman, which has been felt by me very ſenſibly, becauſe it appears that your diſdain for him does not ariſe from any other cauſe than the imprudent eulogy which he has paſſed upon me: and ſince you pretend that I ought to take that eulogy as an expreſsion

of friendſhip, as ſuch I am obliged to reply for him. Beſides that, I write to you from the deſire of occupying a little place in your eſtimation, which I certainly ſhould not merit if I could think of myſelf as my panegiriſt has explained. Only thoſe perſons who have ſtudied the works of ancient great men can preſume to have ſo much merit. As for me, I have meditated upon them as much as I have been able, and find them of the firſt order, conceived and executed with a delicacy and juſtneſs inimitable, and in general are done with the beſt taſte, founded on the reaſons of art and nature.

I am ſenſible of the ſuperiority of the genius of Raphael and the merits of the other great artiſts of the paſt age; but I do not by that forget to admire the talents, vivacity, and eaſe of my contemporaries.

I have propoſed to myſelf to imitate the moſt eminent parts which I have diſcovered in others, contenting myſelf to be the laſt of thoſe who ſeek the good road, rather than to be the firſt among thoſe who are dazzled by a brilliant but falſe glory.

For this reaſon I have had the ſatisfaction to ſee my works well received among nations who eſteem thoſe of living authors, comparing them with the beſt of the artiſts deceaſed.

I ought to be grateful for the favor with which my works have been received at Rome, Dreſden, Florence, London, and Madrid; and by that I ſeek an excuſe for Winkelman, if led away by his friendſhip he has beſtowed hyper-

bolical praiſes on his compatriot. His ſtyle is as it happens to be with every one who would wiſh to praiſe a friend; neither ought his expreſsions to be interpreted literally, becauſe (I believe) nor leſs ſhould yourſelf be taken rigorouſly when in praiſing your fellow citizen Mr. Puget you ſpeak of ſeeing the blood run within the veins of his ſtatue of marble. I do not pretend to juſtify every thing which Winkelman ſays, ſince it would be unjuſt to ſupport all the weakneſs's of a friend; and equally ſo, not to ſpeak in his defence when there is reaſon. Winckelman is not an infallible judge, nor was he of our profeſsion, and although he had been as us, are we ſecure of always judging right? If we had this great priviledge, our productions would be perfect, becauſe it is not the occaſion which is wanting to us, but the judgement; it happening to us daily to produce works which we ourſelves are the firſt to condemn.

That which Winkelman ſays of the head of of the Horſe of Marcus Aurelius, perhaps will be ill founded according to the idea which we now have of the beauty of that animal, but I pray you to conſider that in no ancient monument is to found the head of a Horſe like that of a Ram, which appears to us ſo beautiful, and which in Spain they call CABEZAS DE CARNEROS. By that I am not far from believing that the ancients held as moſt beautiful, the head of a horſe which reſembles that of an ox, as was that of the famous Bucephalus of Alexander. Winkelman wrote ſome things before he knew

antiquity in all its extention, but as for his honour I can atteſt that he was incapable of ſelling the truth for any intereſt or human regard.

For that which regards the paſſage of Plutarch cited by Winkelman, I cannot judge in the Greek tongue; but all the literati of Italy, think Winkelman to be ſo learned in that language that I cannot doubt it. You will beſides permit me to ſay that the French tranſlation of the HISTORY OF THE ARTS, is not exact, becauſe the term ENTIEREMENT NEGLIGE is not to be found in the original German; and beſides that the literal verſion which you refer to in page 53 does not appear to me to be correſpondent to the character of the original language; becauſe I do not believe that any Grecian ever ſaid PAINTERS OF PORTRAITS, and Winkelman tranſlated not ſo much the words as the ſentiments of Plutarch. In ſhort there is nothing more eaſy than equivocation, and in proof of that you yourſelf are deceived in the citation of the note page 54 taking for two different diſcourſes, the one which Winkelman makes of me. But who would wiſh to regard theſe trifles?

For me, I am much obliged to you for the courteſy with which you ſpeak of me in page 55 and your genteel manner makes me deſirous of obtaining your friendſhip, and to ſeek new excuſes for my friend Winkelman, if he has ſpoken of you with little exactneſs in the citations, becauſe in ſubſtance you agree, according to the note 18. book 36. p. 75. of his work.

I agree with you that it is very ill done to ſpeak with little conſideration of a perſon ſo reſpectable as Mr. Wattelet (or any other) of whom the ſame Winkelman wrote me a thouſand eulogies when he knew him at Rome. If I could poſſeſs the talent of writing well, I would give reaſons and facts, and teach things uſeful, without loſing myſelf ſo as to contradict any one; becauſe it appears to me that one might write a good book without ſaying ſuch and ſuch a perſon is deceived; and laſtly if you can prove to me that ſlander is an honeſt thing, then I will agree that it is of little conſequence the manner in which one attacks the reputation of one's neighbour; and I add that ſarcaſm, and inſult, are the worſt ſtyles of complaining and blaming, and from whence reſults always the worſt evil on him who uſes it.

As to the queſtions between Winkelman and Wattelet, it appears to me that the laſt had no motive for what he ſaid, ſince we always hold for good the moſt beautiful ancient ſtatues; and I believe if you would wiſh to ſpeak in good faith you would agree, that the hero propoſed by Wattelet is more a comedian than an ancient ſtatue; and if I may ſpeak with ſincerity, I believe, that were you not ill diſpoſed againſt Winkelman you would not have fallen into that ſophiſm to prove with reaſons contrary to Wattelet that he was in the right, becauſe you, being of the profeſſion, know as well as me that the character of heroes or of Demigods is of true beauty, and ſomewhat ſuperior to human nature, and that this

beauty does not admit of extremes; and thus we ſee it practiced in the ſaid Antinous of the Vatican and in the Meleager which certainly have not the character that Wattelet gives to his heroes. I ſay the ſame of the Fauns. That cited by you and the Cupid of the ſame age, are two beautiful youths, nor are their forms that of Fauns. But if you reflect upon the beautiful Faun of Borgheſe with the young Bacchus in his arms, you will not find there any thing ſilly; as alſo in that at Florence which ſounds the ſymbals, except the head and the arm which are modern. In Rome there are many Fauns elegant forms, and they are not Apollo's as you ſay, but they might be compared to the Bacchus's, except in the phyſiognomy and poſture: beſides that, one ought to make a diſtinction between fauns and ſylvans.

I am perſuaded that if Mr. Wattelet had come to Rome before he publiſhed his books, he would have explained with elegance of ſtyle the ideas which ſo many beautiful productions of the art by the Grecians imprint upon the minds of every man of fine genius and ſenſible heart; nor would he have employed himſelf in adorning ideas taken from the ſtudies of the profeſſors of Paris; and yet I believe that being a man of talent, (as he is) if he had been at Rome he would perhaps have had the fate of being influenced by the ANTIQUOMANIA like many other great French artiſts his predeceſſors, who contributed ſo much to the glory of his age of Lewis 14th.

Winkelman dedicated his book to the Arts, to time, and to me. Time alone will ſhow if his work be uſeful: I believe it will be uſeful, and I think alſo that every one who reads his hiſtory to inſtruct himſelf, and particularly the article of the firſt book page 313. of the tranſlation, will find much profit from the knowledge of Antiquity; and when alſo there is found ſome paſsion for the Greeks, this ſame paſsion will be uſeful, becauſe the modern reſtorers have treated of all the good which they have of that happy preoccupation; and whilſt this has remained in Italy the arts have been ſupported with honor; and in France they have fallen according as this has languiſhed, and where it has never penetrated the arts have never made any progreſs.

When you will have perſuaded the world that Winkelman is an ignorant man, and that Cicero, Pliny, Pauſanius, Quintilian, and other ancient authors knew not what they ſaid on the ſubject of the arts, does it appear to you that we ſhall have gained much by that? The Laocoon, the Gladiator, the Fauns, the Apollo, the Venus and many other ſtatues will always ſuſtain the honor of the Grecians; nor can you yourſelf deny that beautiful proportion, ideal beauty, facility of the poſture, nobleneſs and equalneſs of the ſtyle, knowledge of the bones and muſcles, ſolid expreſsion, the ſoul and vivacity of the characters, the drapery which dreſſes but hides not the naked, and laſtly the execution which one admires in every place

and in every light, you cannot deny, I repeat but that theſe are merits which one finds in a ſuperior degree in the beautiful productions of the Greeks, You know yourſelf what difficulty it coſts to acquire any of the aforeſaid parts; and wiſhing to be ſincere I will confeſs that in oppoſition to ſuch merits, very little is that of expreſsing well the folds, the fleſh and the veins; and laſtly grand ſtrokes, boldneſs of deſign, and that which is called SPIRIT, (the only refuge of the moderns,) vaniſh by the ſide of the ſolid beauty of the ancients.

I wiſh you the glory of perfecting a work which will convince the world of your ſuperior talents, and I feel great regret at not being able to ſee the magnificent equeſtrian ſtatue, which you are working and of which I have heard ſuch praiſes, and which would give me, according to my imagination, much pleaſure, I wiſh you would publiſh your ſtudies made upon Horſes, in order that the public and the arts might profit of your lights.

I crave pardon for having troubled you with ſo long a letter; and begging the honor of your friendſhip I offer you my ſervices in Rome, to to which place I ſhall go in the courſe of a few days.

LETTER

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS.

TO

MONSIGNOR FABRONI.

PURVEYOR GENERAL OF THE COLLEGE OF PISA.

NOTE OF THE EDITOR.

The following letter is in reply to one written last year to Mengs, by Monsieur Fabroni, Preceptor to the Royal Princes of Tuscany, and a person well known in Italy for his literature.

That prelate had written a description of the famous group of Niobe, which the Grand Duke sent from Rome to Florence a few years before. But this prelate knowing of what weight the advice of Mengs was in these matters, sent him his dissertation, begging his opinion of it before he published it. Mengs was then in such a deplorable state of health, that his death was expected every instant. Nevertheless, he dictated the following letter, with the note accompanying it, which treat of various points of the aforesaid dissertations, that have latterly come to light, and the illustrious author has wisely profited of the suggestions of Mengs.

PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

I HUMBLY beg your pardon for not having immediately replied to your polite letter, having been impeded by an extreme weakneſs of health, which has ſcarcely allowed me the faculty of ſpeech, ſufficient to dictate a letter, being almoſt deprived of my voice. Beſides the charge which your Excellency has deigned to give me; that is, to tell you my ſentiments upon the diſſertation you have ſent me, is a thing ſuperior to my ſtrength at all times, but greatly ſo at the preſent, in which I do not find myſelf in a ſtate fit for ſuch application. However, the inclination to obey your Excellency, has made me conquer every other regard: I therefore proceed to the execution of your command, and beg you to accept whatever is good or bad in theſe my reflections.

I have many times peruſed the diſſertation upon the collection of the ſtatues of the fable of Niobe; and it appears to me to be the intention of your Excellency to give an elegant and learned deſcription of them, almoſt in the form of a panegyric, by raiſing every beauty of the art to the higheſt degree, and to give it that ſplendour which ſuch a work merits. Under this appearance I cannot but admire this learned diſſertation; finding in it all that, and even more then I could have deſired; notwithſtanding I have noted ſome trifling things, although almoſt of no con-

ſequence, in the annexed papers, with the numbers at the margin of the aforeſaid work.

I am convinced that the mode held out by your Excellency in that diſſertation, is that which ought to be obſerved ſpeaking of things poſſeſſed by great Princes and praiſed by the public; from whence in another ſtyle, they could not be approved of, either on the one or on the other part, becauſe the criticiſm alone renders it uſeful in time, when the force of diſpleaſure which it occaſions is diminiſhed, and leaves place to every one to accept of the truth.

If however prudence obliges one to reſtrain too much ſincerity, which might diſpleaſe others, and injure him it expoſes, friendſhip ought to take away ſuch ſuperfluous regard, and permit that freedom which otherwiſe would not be allowable; from whence I ſuppoſe that with your Excellency I may be allowed to manifeſt ſome ſentiments, when with another I ſhould be ſilent.

It could not paſs unnoticed to your Excellency the great inequality of the figures which compoſe the collection of the ſtatues of the fable of Niobe; from the great incorrectneſs of many of them, and the ſuperiority in beauty of many other ſtatues which we have of the ancients. In the Vatican is preſerved a Venus of no great excellence, and one might ſay, almoſt awkward, but with a head very beautiful, equal to that of Niobe; and that head is certainly its original one, not having ever been detached from it. This ſtatue is certainly

the copy of another much ſuperior; and at Madrid, in the Royal Palace, is preſerved a head entirely ſimilar to this of the Venus in the Vatican, but of a perfection ſo much greater as not to admit ſcarce of a compariſon. Thus I ſuppoſe will be the ſucceſs of the ſtatues of the fable of Niobe, which appear ſufficiently beautiful, becauſe we have not now any of the moſt excellent; therefore I can never believe, that your Excellency can conſider this collection as truly the work of one of the beſt artiſts; in the mean time it might be taken rather as a copy done from one of the beſt originals, and executed by different artiſts, more or leſs good, and who, perhaps, alſo joined to it thoſe figures which are ſo very inferior. It might be likewiſe, that they were in part done anew, in the low times of the art, and as much deteriorated by the reparations af the moderns, as by that of the ancients before they were digged up; ſo that to inveſtigate if this work be of Scopa, or of Praxiteles, is certainly a beautiful topic for writing; but I fear that on ſight of the ſtatues it will appear ſuperfluous: beſides it is very difficult to diſtinguiſh that which one could not know in the time of Pliny, who ſufficiently ſhows that the diverſity of ſtyle ought to be almoſt imperceptible.

I beg your Excellency not to believe that I am a depreciator of the monuments of antiquity, or in particular, that I little admire thoſe of which we ſpeak; much to the contrary, I venerate many others even inferior; but I make

a diſtinction in the parts of the art, between the bounty of the ſtyle, and the perfection of the work. The firſt diſcovers the tracks of the maxims with which the ancients worked; but the perfection is peculiar, as the artiſts are more or leſs of ability. In conſidering the firſt part, I admire almoſt all the monuments of antiquity, excepting only thoſe of the time in which the too great ignorance of the artiſts impeded their leaving traces in their works of the inſtructions of their predeceſſors. But when I conſider alſo the moſt eſteemed monuments of antiquity in the part of perfection, I do not find that the whole merit that extreme praiſe which we read, and which was conceded to them by ſo many illuſtrious and great men; for inveſtigating more and more their hiſtory, as well as the works themſelves, it appears to me incredible that we can poſſeſs the works of the moſt celebrated artiſts of antiquity; and if to my eyes, thoſe which we have appear inſuperable, I ſhall accuſe my natural ignorance, rather than cede it to reaſon, which tells me they are not ſo.

As Rome was many times deſpoiled of ſtatues, one cannot know for certain if they left the works of the moſt famous artiſts. All the names which we read on the ancient marbles, are obſcure in hiſtory, beſides that, many are falſified by the moderns, and perhaps invented like that of Glicon. I believe Phedro aſſerts, that even in his time fictious names were put to ſtatues; and ſuch will be perhaps that of Liſippus, to the Hercules in the palace of Pitti. But what ſhall

we ſay in admiring the ſublime Apollo of Belvedere worked in Italian marble? and of ſo many other excellent ſtatues, confronting Pliny, where he ſpeaks of them as a new diſcovery of the cave of Iuni. Who can be certain that the ſuperb group of the Laocoon is that praiſed by Pliny? and although it be, may it not be done in the time of the ſame Titus, and praiſed by the hiſtorian from ſome hidden purpoſe? ſo much the more as this is of five pieces of marble, and in the eldeſt ſon is an incorrection too viſible not to be obſerved.

You will aſk perhaps, how theſe works could have been ſo famous? it is this which humiliates us, that we have not wiſdom ſufficient to know and to exalt the greatneſs of the Greeks; and to ſay the truth, it would be even more uſeful to the advancement of the arts of deſign, that one ſhould regard the monuments remaining, principally by conjecture to know with right reaſon, which ought to be thoſe that we have loſt. To the contrary, reputing them now as the moſt excellent, many of our artiſts excuſe their natural ignorance by ſaying, that even in theſe maſter pieces, they find not only ſome imperfections, which effectually they could find even in the works of the moſt famous, and which are inſeparable with humanity, but they find alſo errors.

A thouſand thoughts have occurred to me upon this ſubject; but I do not wiſh to trouble your Excellency, nor can I conſide in myſelf for conveying them intelligibly. I am &c.

1. It would be a misfortune, if the excellency of the arts depended upon liberty incompatible with our times; from whence this thought would discourage princes in protecting them, and the artists in executing them.
2. It appears to me, that painters and sculptors of the first epoch sought not grace, but solely the imitation of truth, and successively beauty, which always excludes all rigor; and by as much as we can know of the few ancient paintings which remain, their style was more soft, their clare obscure more sweet, and their contours more simple and less intricate than in the modern painting; the same may be said of the grandeur and elegance of their sculpture.
3. I never can comprehend how grace can be called austere, being two qualities directly opposite.
4. I believe Praxiteles and Apelles did not change so much the forms as the style, expressing after the most easy manner the outlines of beauty.
5. I do not comprehend, how there can be more than one grace in the art. The designs of Raphael, Leonard, and Sarto, merit the name of beautiful; as also those of Guido, and of Albano: those of Correggio are graceful, and those of Parmigianino are affected and studied.

6. The ſharpneſs of the eyebrows is not deſtructive of the lines, but rather is uſed by the ancients to ſhow their colour which, if they are black, give a ſeverity, which by that ought to expreſs with the greateſt acuteneſs, the angle of the eye brow. In fact, in the head of Jove, one obſerves the eyebrow conſtantly acute, and in the Deity of flaxen hair, one ſees it ſoftened. If it were in ſtyle, one ſhould find that character angulated even in the mouth, noſe, and in all the other parts, ſuch as one obſerves in ſome Tuſcan or very ancient Grecian monuments.

7. The good Winkelman was ſomewhat viſionary; a defect excuſable in antiquarians. I have in chalk, the head of which he ſpeaks: the eyebrows do not diſcover any particular difference; nor has Pliny ever ſaid that there were two Niobes, one of Scopa and the other of Praxiteles.

8. It appears to me, that the difference of the forms between mothers and children, conſiſts more in the greater or leſſer gentility, than in the natural character of the forms.

9. If one admits of very ſweet harmony, one ſhall deſtroy by that the auſtere ſtyle. The auſtere can only be in the ſublime and at the moſt in the beautiful, but never in the ſweet or graceful ſtyle.

10. The breaſts are certainly abundant, but as if they were drooping down, which happens with women of advanced age.

11. It does not appear to me that this figure repreſents man in a dying ſtate, but dead. And the breaſt does not ſeem much ſwelled with muſcles, but the ſtructure is ſolely that of an active youth, as even now we ſee (though ſeldom) in nature; but this ſtructure depends more upon the bone of the thorax, than upon the muſcles; yet it appears to me that they elected that truth more in reſemblance of the idea of the ſubject which they wiſhed to repreſent; becauſe their ſyſtem, and art which they added to truth, did not ever conſiſt either in the increaſe or change of truth, but ſolely in the choice of the greateſt beauty, and ſimplicity of the forms. The Laocoon is repreſented as a ſtrong, healthy old man, convulſed by poiſon, and nothing more; but the Torſo is, as I have ſeen many times truth itſelf.

12. I believe if your Excellency will conſider well the words of Plutarch, you will not be able to condemn them, becauſe it does not appear to me, that he wiſhes to ſay, that painters neglected other parts, but ſolely carries on the compariſon of painters by ſaying that in making the images of man, one applies oneſelf to expreſs the eyes and all the parts of the face, where, as one might ſay, the ſoul reſides, not

taking ſuch care of the other parts; but this one ought to underſtand only as regarding the likeneſs of ſuch and ſuch a man, becauſe here one treats of a portrait, upon which the compariſon goes. In fact we ſee the ancient ſtatues with the heads of portraits, and the bodies in the moſt elegant proportion, which perhaps ſuch as had not; and they repreſent the Alexander painted by Apelles with the thunderbolt in his hand, had perhaps the face of Alexander, but not his figure.

13. By what I have obſerved of the ancient heads, theſe have always the eyes not ſo long as the good modern heads, but certainly their ſize conſiſts in the form and ſhape, and in the exact encaſement of true beauty.

14. It is not true, that the bones which encircle the eye ought to be large; this doctrine would be even dangerous; becauſe the ancients have the jugal always rather a little elevated, in order not to enlarge the face and render it triangular.

15. The term FORESHORTNING belongs to painting, and has not place in ſculpture, except when one would wiſh to ſay, the foreſhortning of the muſcles in their contractions, and the conſequent effect of the fold of a member.

16. I could aſk a little indulgence for the moderns, becauſe it is not neceſſary to abuſe ourſelves in order to elevate the ancients,

to whom, perhaps, in lively expreſsion one may ſay ſome of the moderns are ſuperior.

17. It appears that we do great injuſtice to Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Andrew del Sarto, Titian, Correggio, Paolo, and to many others, when we would wiſh to aſcribe the revival of painting to the Carracci's, and perhaps only to favour the Niobe; nevertheleſs the profile of the ſhoulders of the woman of the transfiguration, the other near to the lunatic, and many others of Raphael, reſemble much more the Niobes then the heads of the ſame Guido.

FRAGMENT

OF A

SECOND REPLY OF MENGS

TO

MONSIGNOR FABRONI

UPON THE

N I O B E.

SECOND NOTE OF THE EDITOR

The foregoing was the letter which Mengs sent to Monsignor Fabroni. I have found besides among the papers of our Philosophical Painter, a fragment of another reply which he thought to have given him more fully; and because this fragment contains also some useful information, I wish not to deprive the public of it, esteeming as precious every production of that famous man.

PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

HAVING received the diſſertation of your Excellency upon the collection of the ſtatues of the family of Niobe, together with the prints, and with one of your polite letters, I had the greateſt curioſity to read this diſſertation, in which I could not but admire the delicacy of your ſentiments, and your penetration into the ſecrets of the art; ſo that I thought to have replied to it quickly without extending myſelf by any very great reflections; but having then conſidered that you required me to examine the whole with the greateſt care, and to expoſe with the greateſt candour whatever preſented itſelf t my mind, I reſolved to obey you.

I will firſt tell you, that your works appear to me ſo perfect that I find no exception in them, becauſe you have entered into the fable with ſuch vivacity, that you have given it an air of truth.

I ſuppoſe your Excellency has had examined by connoiſſeurs if the marble of which the aforeſaid ſtatues were carved be of Greece, or Italy; becauſe if it be of the laſt, the queſtion in the treatiſe is anſwered; namely if they be the works of Scopa or of Praxiteles. I confeſs beſides to your excelleney that theſe two artiſts appear to me ſo reſpectible, ſo great, and ſo excellent, that I know not how to bring myſelf to believe that we have any work of theirs among thoſe which have remained of the Grecians. It ap-

pears to me alſo as Pliny has ſaid, that the difference of the ſtyle of theſe two ſculptors was not very conſiderable, becauſe even then it was difficult to diſtinguiſh them.

You will permit me to make ſome reflections upon the difficulty which I find to believe that we are in poſſeſsion of the moſt excellent works of antiquity. Every one knows that Rome was ſeveral times deſpoiled of the beſt things to ornament Conſtantinople, and that in the times of Theodoſius and others, all the ſtatues in Rome were deſtroyed; from whence one may argue, that thoſe which eſcaped ſo cruel a ſentence, ought to be the leaſt famous, or ſuch as were in ignoble places and neglected.

If the excellency of a work could perſuade one that it is of the moſt famous maſters, the Gladiator of Borgheſe will be that of Agaſias, but this name is not to be found among any of the eminent artiſts: the ſame might be ſaid of the Torſo of Belvidere. That name of Glicon given to the Pharneſian Hercules, one ought to ſuſpect of ſome falſification; becauſe beſides not having any account of a great ſculptor of that name, one finds in the palace of Pitti another Hercules reſembling the aforeſaid, with the name of Liſippus, which makes one believe this to be of the ſame works to which the ancients gave fine names, as Phedrus ſays in his Exordium of Book 5.

If the Pharneſian Hercules had been the true work of Glicon, he who copied it to make that of Pitti, would have engraved the ſame name to

equalize it with the original. I believe this a a copy of the other, from the great reſemblance; and becauſe it appears to me that it is a portrait of Commodus. One may add alſo that neither Fulvio Orſini,or Flaminio Vacca who deſcribe the diſcovery of the FARNESIANO, do not mention a word of the incription; in the mean time the laſt ſpeaks of that of Pitti. One may add alſo that the manner in which the letters of the inſcription are engraven, is not certainly that which they uſed in the beſt time of the Grecians.

But what ſhall we ſay of the moſt beautiful ancient ſtatues which have remained, as is that of the Pitian Apollo of Belvedere? Shall we ſuppoſe it one of thoſe works which have imortalized their authors? If its beauty makes one believe ſo, it is certain however that it is of the marble of Carrara, or of Seravezza, and although one would wiſh alſo to ſuſtain, that ſome famous Grecian had ſculptured it in Italy, Pliny however atteſts that the ſaid cave of Luni, or be it of Carrara, was recently diſcovered, and of courſe it is probable that the ſtatue was made in the time of Nero, and placed at Neptune where it was found; and perhaps its author was not of the ability of the other artiſts employed by that emperor in his edifice at Rome, where neceſſarily they ought to have executed the moſt precious things.*

* It will be an error perhaps to believe that Apollo was found in the house of Nero; because if it had been thus, Pliny would have spoken of it, as he spoke of the Laocoon, and of other ex-

The greateſt doubt would be to define the marvellous group of the Laocoon; the maſter piece among all the monuments which have remained of antiquity, and executed with ſuch maſterſhip in Grecian marble, that it leaves no doubt of the ſuperior abilities of the ſculptor. On this work Pliny beſtowed his greateſt eulogy ſaying, that it was the moſt beautiful ever known. But one may aſk if Pliny was a competent judge? as he admires above all the SERPENTS which he calls DRAGONS; nor does a perſon ſhow great knowledge who can admire ſo much an acceſſary thing, becauſe that would diſcredit the principal. One may alſo doubt if that be the ſame group of which Pliny ſpeaks, becauſe he makes it of one piece of marble whereas this is compoſed of five.

The name of Ageſander is not to be found in other celebrated authors as an excellent ſculptor; and ſince it is not likely that he could have executed only that work, one may with ſome foundation ſuſpect, that the exceſsive praiſe which Pliny gives to that group ariſes from very different cauſes; that it be either from his friend-

cellent statues, known in his time. It is more probable that that sculpture was of the time of Adrian, when the arts arrived to the highest degree under the emperors. From whence the place where that Apollo was found, was more likely to have been that magnificent villa which Adrian had in Anzium, in which says Philostratus in the life of Apolonius Tianeus, lib. viii. cap. 8. this emperor deposited a book, and various letters of that philosopher; and he adds that that villa was the most pleasing to Adrian of all his imperial palaces.

Neither do I believe that Apollo is killing the serpent Piton, but rather that he is aiming at the family of Niobe.

ſhip for that artiſt, or his complacency to the Emperor Titus, who this work perhaps ſufficiently pleaſed, or laſtly from the impreſsion theſe ſerpents made in him, which he ſolely praiſes in a work where there are ſo many others eſſential beauties to be obſerved. Among theſe, the mode of working the marble is remarkable, being left by the chiſel, eſpecially in the fleſh, without the appearance of the raſp, the pummice, or of cleaning; a ſtyle of working which one obſerves in many other egregious works, as in the Venus of Medicis, &c. All the ſtatues worked in that manner are leſs finiſhed in the minute parts, and prevails in them a certain taſte which never enters into the art, except after having conquered every difficulty; that is, when the artiſts are arrived to that negligence, and facility which in place of diminiſhing, admirably increaſes the delight of the the ſpectators. This ſtyle however, cannot have been introduced in the art at the time of the moſt excellent artiſts, becauſe the moſt regular way is ſimply to begin by the moſt neceſſary, to proceed by acquiring lights to expreſs the eſſential of things, and refining the ſtudy to chooſe laſtly the moſt beautiful, and the moſt uſeful, by which one arrives to perfection, which conſiſts in the equal execution of all the parts, in their good order; from whence reſults a whole capable of exalting our underſtanding to the comprehenſion of the ſubject repreſented by the artiſt. Proceeding further, and ſeeking always the facility of things, and finding always the

greateſt difficulty to unite all the parts of the art, that is, the perfect imitation of Truth, with a choice the moſt exquiſite, and with juſt order, one abandons by little and little the parts moſt laborious, which are thoſe produced from the rigorous imitation of Truth, and one forms certain rules of practice drawn from the moſt famous works, by endeavouring to imitate them in preference to truth. This is what forms that pleaſing taſte which gives an idea of perfection of the art, as well as Truth. Of this ſpecies all the works appear to me which are executed only with the chiſel.

That which makes me ſtill believe that this ſtyle of working marble was not of the artiſts of the firſt order is, that in the time of Adrian, when they moſt ſtudied to imitate them, they worked in a manner very different; they finiſhed with ſufficient ſtudy and ſmoothneſs, as is the Hercules of Pitti, whoſe ſtyle the artiſts of that copy endeavoured to imitate, to make it paſs as a work of that famous maſter. It is always more eaſy to imitate the ſtyle, than the reaſonings and ſcience of the originals; and thus the artiſts after the oppreſsions of Greece, failed little by little in theſe parts. From whence I doubt ſtill more that the ſculptures which we poſſeſs, are either not the moſt excellent of antiquity, or elſe copies. But, not to be too troubleſome to your Excellency, I omit other reflections which I could adjoin to the foregoing.

You will no doubt accuſe me of audacity, becauſe I exclude from excellency ſo many ancient

ſtatutes which all people admire as being moſt beautiful. To this I dare not reply with that liberty I could wiſh. Better would it be for a man of letters to do it who poſſeſſes the experience of the art, and has acquired it by a mature examination of the ancient ſtatues and monuments. Notwithſtanding, to ſatisfy you at leaſt in this part, I ſay that if the Apollo of Belvedere had the fleſhineſs and morbidity of the ſaid Antinous of the ſame muſeum, it would without doubt be much more beautiful; and ſtill more ſo, if the whole were finiſhed as much as is the head. And the group of the Laocoon would be ſtill more admirable if the figures of the children were executed with the delicacy which one obſerves in other works. But all human things, however beautiful they may be, could ſtill be more ſo; and ſince every one is ignorant of abſolute perfection, no one can determine the limits to which theſe artiſts arrived who were ſo much eſteemed, and praiſed, by men ſo reaſonable and intelligent. Therefore as we have no monuments which we can with certainty ſay are of theſe celebrated maſters, I hope to have pardon if I believe that their works comprehended perfection, and equality of ſtyle, imitation, choice of truth, corrections as much as the art can allow, exempt from every negligence, and full of that greatneſs, which I do not know how to diſcover in the works that have remained.

Theſe reflections inſtead of diminiſhing in me a veneration for the things of antiquity, renders them more eſtimable, conſidering by thoſe

that remain, what ought to have been thoſe which we have loſt.

One ſees alſo ſo much ſcience, and maſterſhip in the works done by ſlaves and LIBERTI who were thoſe employed in theſe arts at Rome, that although they wanted the eſteem and honors which had exalted them ſo much in Greece, yet nevertheleſs one obſerves in theſe works, even to the total decay of the art, the excellency of their ſchool, which is always deficient in the moderns, and which will render always more eſtimable the reliques of the ancients.

Returning finally to the collection of the ſtatues of Niobe, I have the boldneſs to tell your excellency that I believe it a copy of others much better of ſome of the Grecians; but each of an artiſt of unequal merit. I ſuppoſe beſides that having been reſtored in the low times of the art, and in part done anew, from this ariſes the great inequality of the work, and of its parts.

By what I can conjecture concerning the harſhneſs, which you have obſerved in the eye-brow and hair, it does not appear to me that it comes from the ſtyle of the maſter, but is rather done expreſsly to ſignify the black hair and to give with it a greater expreſsion of ſerioufneſs and ſadneſs to the figure; becauſe if it were ſtyle, one ſhould find it alſo in the mouth, and in the other parts which are ſuſceptible of angles; and that which has been the intention of the artiſts is deduced clearly from the heads of Jove which remain in all the ancient monuments. All have the eye-brow expreſsive, and delineated with

force, which one does not find either in the Bacchus's, Venus's, or Apollo's, which the ancients have represented of flaxen hair.

I confess that my feeble talents do not arrive to distinguish the different kinds of grace, although I know that beauty and grace are things very different: nevertheless I understand how they place in sculpture the contours called foreshortening. But the force of these expressions will depend upon the idiom of the Italian language, which I do not possess as I could wish. Be it as it may, I call in my style the designs of Raphael beautiful, &c. . . . . .

LETTER

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS

TO

DON ANTONIO PONTZ.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following letter was printed four years ago at Madrid, in the work of Anthony Pontz, entitled VIAXES D' ESPANA or travels in Spain. Mengs having also wished that they should publish it, wrote it in Spanish, in which language he had not a great facility of writing, therefore various things remain somewhat confused. To remedy this defect, means have been taken to correct it as much as possible; however, without retouching it so much as to alter the original style. A few notes are adjoined to explain the signification of various words proper to the arts.

This same letter was printed at Turin, translated into Italian, but so badly, that it gave great grief both to myself and Mengs, who, if death had not prevented him, was determined to have translated it himself, and to publish it, to do away the bad opinion which he thought the world must have of it from that translation; because, to the want of clearness which is in the Spanish, there are added, errors, and manifest contradictions.

The memoirs of Correggio were written by Mengs at Florence, to give it to those who made the collection of the lives of painters of all the schools, who, however, extracted only that poor article of Correggio which one reads in their works.

His principal end, besides that of making known the merits of the great Correggio better than it was before, was, to supply what was deficient in the life written by Vasari, and to correct his equivocations. Notwithstanding, many have believed that Vasari did not write that life with all the instruction and impartiality necessary. Mengs likewise believed it, but did not wish to interfere too much in such questions, and contented himself with his ordinary moderation to elucidate well the facts upon which he established the reputation of Correggio, without entering into this dispute, nor cared for the opinion or sentiments of those who make it a national cause to support Vasari.

The practical lessons on painting, at the end, have been gathered from different parts, where they were spread without order or method. Mengs dictated them at various times, in various languages, and to various disciples, according as they occurred in his instructions. Each wrote them according to his capacity; and for that reason, many of them are found in such confusion, that it is impossible to decifer them, and they have become for that reason abandoned. But by that I do not intend to say, that these which are published, are free from error; quite the contrary. I know the disorder in which they are found; the irregularity of the style, the continued repetitions, the errors of language and of construction, and his confused mode of explaining himself. I make this remark in order to prevent the murmers and censure of certain persons who to vent the rage which the essential merit of the work will excite on their delicate self-love, run after words and phrases. Let them therefore know, that I abandon to them, all they may find here of this kind to exercise their criticism; and I condemn as much as they would wish to condemn. It is sufficient to say, that they leave me in the opinion, that their heads are full of empty words, and that envy only torments those who are possessed of it.

SIR

YOU aſk my opinion upon the merits of the moſt remarkable paintings which are preſerved in the royal palace at Madrid to publiſh it in a deſcription that you are going to give of Spain. You do me honour, and animate me, by believing me capable of ſuch an undertaking, which beſides being ſuperior to my ſtrength, is alſo more difficult than you imagine, principally becauſe I am not a man of letters, and have not grace to treat of a ſubject ſo delicate.

You know very well that to me few paintings can appear ſo beautiful as to others; although I admire the works of great men ſtill more than thoſe who make up the train of vulgar amateurs, with the difference however, that thoſe find an infinite number of excellent painters; and I find only a ſmall number, and reduce it to thoſe few who merit the glorious title of the great.

Nevertheleſs it is certain that we have all a common right to value the works of the belle arts; becauſe the learned and ignorant have each more or leſs an idea, that they have to give delight by the imitation of things known; from whence they approve of thoſe which, according to their underſtanding, have this quality If works are ſo inferior, that beholders in viewing them, can diſcover the defects immediately, they deſpiſe them;

but if by the variety of objects, pleasing and easy to comprehend, they delight the sight, then they approve of them: if however they meet great complications of reasonings, of which the most easy guide them to the knowledge of the difficult, they form to themselves in that that case the pleasure of supposition, by exalting their understanding and flattering their self-love, and they praise as from gratitude the said work more or less, according to its natural and habitual conditions. Thus the devout, the lascivious, the learned, the idiot, approve of different objects, with greater or less enthusiasm: however from things too superior, and totally beyond our understanding, we receive little or no delight.

From whence you may consider how various must be the opinions of men with respect to the works of painting, and how dangerous it is to give with a sincerity ones sentiments upon the same; because every one is bigotted to his opinion of that which he approves, or disapproves, and generally he has the misfortune, that what others abase he praises, not from affection to the thing praised, but from self-love. Man not being able to tolerate himself from being surpassed by others in his understanding, and not having force to oppose reason, has recourse to the remedy of discrediting whosoever says the truth with the title of evil-speaker, or at least depreciator, or of an insatiable man; from whence it is sometimes a misfortune to see errors, and always imprudent to discover them without necessity.

Notwithſtanding I wiſh to oblige you, ſpeaking however with a painter, who knows the difficulty of the art, and the impoſsibility of poſſeſsing it without defects. I have not the vanity to make myſelf a judge to criticiſe thoſe who are of the ſame profeſsion of myſelf, and aſſure you, that I have great eſteem for all, even thoſe, who according to the rules of the art would be very cenſurable; and when I have no other motive to eſteem them, I admire them for the courage and eaſe with which they have executed their works, and which often are not deficient in being done after the beſt principles. If therefore I attempt to expoſe ſome critical reflections, I do it only to be of ſome utility, of which you give me reaſon to hope.

Firſt, before undertaking the deſcription of the paintings, it appears to me not uſeleſs to give a ſuſcinct idea of painting in general, in order that perſons little inſtructed in that matter, may be able to enjoy the beauties of the excellent productions which I am going to deſcribe.

You are not ignorant that painting has been at all times held in ſuch eſteem, that the ancient Greeks called it the Liberal and Noble Art, and laſtly introduced the term of the BELLE ART, which ſuits it very well. One has, however to reflect, that painting is a noble or liberal art, from the mental ſtudy which it neceſſarily requires; and the ſuperiority of the underſtanding and noble mind which he ought to have

who practices it. It is alſo a noble art for having by its excellence the road always open to nobility, and honour; as many examples prove, in Spain and other places.

The term of BELLE ART correſponds likewiſe very well with painting on account of its productions, becauſe every painting ought to have beauty, without which it will always be defective.

The noble art of painting cannot be compared with any other thing better than poetry, having both the ſame end, to inſtruct by pleaſing.

Painting imitates all the appearances of the viſible objects of nature, not punctually as they are, but as they appear, or could or ought to appear. Its end being to inſtruct by pleaſing, it will not ſucceed by copying nature as it is, becauſe there will be the ſame, and alſo more difficulty to comprehend the productions of art than thoſe of nature; from whence its aim ought to be to give ideas of things produced by nature; and its works will be ſo much the more eſtimable, the more the idea is clear and perfect.

All that which art can produce, is already formed in nature, either entire or in part; and although art cannot arrive to imitate to perfection an object of compleat beauty, (which caſe is very rare) one may notwithſtanding ſay, that the art of painting is in general more compleat, and more beautiful than nature itſelf; becauſe it unites perfections which are naturally ſeperate, or depurates the objects of all that which is not eſſential to the choſen character of

the idea which we would wiſh to give to the ſpectator. Beſides that, nature is ſo complicated in all her productions that we cannot comprehend the mode how ſhe produces them, nor eaſily diſtinguiſh her eſſential parts. To the contrary, painting with the aforeſaid conditions, gives a clear idea of things originally produced by nature, without fatiguing the underſtanding; which always occaſions delight, becauſe all that which moves the ſenſes and the intellect without faſtidiouſneſs, produces agreeable ſenſations; and for that reaſon, imitation delights more than its prototype. Then of courſe painting ought not to be a ſervile, but an ideal imitation; that is, it ought to imitate the parts of natural objects, in a manner, that they may give an idea of the being of a thing which we perceive; and that is done by expreſsing the viſible ſigns of the eſſential difference which there is between one object and another, be they of a very different nature, or almoſt ſimilar. Always when they make viſible this eſſential difference they give clear ideas of their eſſence, and property, and take from the underſtanding the fatigue of comprehending them.

Alſo the painter as well as the poet ought to chooſe his ſubjects from things which offer in nature. Whether theſe exiſt or not they ought always to appear poſsible; and one ought never to employ the ſame beauty and perfection of a degree impoſsible, except in the perſons of ſuppoſed divinity, in whom is rendered poſsible

that which otherwiſe would not be ſo. Theſe beauties and perfections are commonly called IDEAL, becauſe they are not to be found in nature; from whence it ariſes, that many believe the Ideal not to be natural or true. Painting always has and ought to have much of the Ideal; to be underſtood however, that this is nothing more than a choice of the parts already exiſting in nature, which agree with the ſame idea, combined in a manner that they form an unity in a work of the art to attract the mind of him who views it, and to place it in that ſtate which the artiſt would wiſh. In this conſiſts the artifice of painters, and with that they make PICTORESQUE any natural object whatſoever, by giving it a diſpoſition capable of raiſing particular ſenſations in the minds of the ſpectators.

When a painting has the choice, imitation, and execution directed to the ſame idea, it will be always a good painting; to the contrary it will always be defective when it is deprived of theſe qualities. Notwithſtanding, it might be of better or inferior ſtyle according to the choice made by the author of the objects he propoſes to imitate.

All the parts united together which compoſe painting with regard to the practical part, or execution, form that which is called STYLE, which is properly the manner of being of the works of painting.

Theſe Styles are almoſt infinite, but the prin-

cipal ones however one may reduce to a certain number; which are the ſublime, the beautiful, the graceful, the ſignificant, and the natural; not making account of the vicious ſtyles, although I do not deſpiſe the authors of them, becauſe often great defects are found by the ſide of great merits; and by that we miſtake vices, by taking their defects for virtues.

DECIPIT EXAMPLAR VITIIS IMITABILE.

Horat:

With regard to ſuch ſtyles, I will explain myſelf as well as I am able, although the ſubject is ſuperior to my abilities; ſo that I ſhall be called audacious to prtend to undertake it; but I do it with the hope of giving at leaſt opportunity that others more able and more capable, may apply themſelves to explain theſe things better than me; and I ſhall be content in being diſapproved of, provided that others may ſay things more uſeful upon a point ſo important for painters and amateurs, to know how to diſtinguiſh the ſtyles, and eſteem thoſe moſt who juſtly merit it.

SUBLIME STYLE.

By ſublime, I mean the mode of treating the art agreeable to the execution of the ideas with which one would wiſh to explain objects of a quality ſuperior to our nature. The artifice of that ſtyle conſiſts in knowing how to form an unity of ideas, poſsible and impoſsible,

in the ſame object; from whence it is neceſſary that the artiſt unites and employs known forms, and appearances, to make a whole which exiſts only in his imagination, and by the known parts which he will take from nature, he ought to make an abſtract of all the ſigns of their mechaniſm. MODE in all its parts ought to be ſimple, uniform, auſtere, or at leaſt ſolemn and grave.*

We have no examples of that ſtyle in the works of painting, thoſe being deficient of ancient Greece; therefore we ought to have recourſe to the ſtatues which have remained of them, among which the Pitius Apollo of the Vatican is that which moſt accoſts ſuch ſtyle; and muſt have been perfectly ſo that of the Jove, and the Minerva of Phidia at Elis, and at Athens. The great Raphael D'Urbino never arrived to the ſublime, although he reached the grand ſtyle. Michael Angelo produced only the terrible.† Although both approached the ſublime in their ideas and inventions, yet their forms

* Mengs meant by MODE the same as style, or manner of execution. By AUSTERE he meant to say that in the execution one has to give the form an air of simplicity; to the contours lines less curves or less waving than in the graceful subjects; and to the expression a character of majesty and greatness, rejecting every minutiæ and affectation.

† We have in another place explained GRAND style. TERRIBLE is used by way of Metaphor of that style which in composition chooses the posture most forced, and extraordinary and in executing the lines less soft; in the expression, the point most extreme, and in the colouring the tone less pleasing: it is the contrary to softness and grace; nor can any one deny that this style of Michael Angelo was not very excellent and very terrible.

were not coreſpondent; although the execution, particularly of Raphael, was very natural for that ſtyle. Hannibal Caracci by imitating of the forms of the ancient ſtatues approached it ſometimes, but without uniting the ſublimity of ideas with the ſtyle: the ſame might be ſaid of Domenico Zampieri.

Beautiful Style.

Beauty is the idea or imagination of poſsible perfection. Perfection never renders itſelf viſible without producing beauty; nor produces beauty without ſhowing the good quality or or perfection of the object in which it is found.

Beauty exalts our underſtanding to the knowledge of the good qualities of objects; which without that would have remained hidden, and difficult to comprehend. The ſtyle proper to expreſs ſuch objects ought to be elegant, and void of ſuperfluity; without wanting however any part eſſential, and by diſtinguiſhing every thing according to its dignity, or moſt uſeful quality. Nevertheleſs, the execution ought to be individual, and ſofter than the ſublime ſtyle, yet in a manner ſufficient to give a clear idea of poſsible perfection.

Nor is leſs that ſtyle of beauty found perfect in the works of the moderns. If thoſe of Zeuxis had been preſerved, particularly his Helen, one might have been able perhaps to form a juſt idea of it. The Grecian ſtatues which remain are gene-

rally more or leſs of ſuch a ſtyle, according as the character of each permits it, and although we have very many expreſsions of the paſsions, as in the Laocoon, they ſtill diſcover beauty in the forms, although in a violent and altered ſtate.

It appears that beauty changes its characters according to the ſubject in which it is found; thus we ſee it approaching to the ſublime in the Apollo of the Vatican: in the Meleager one ſees human and heroical beauty; In the Niobe, female beauty; in the Appollo and in the Venus of Medicis the beauty of graceful ſubjects. Very beautiful are the Caſtor and Pollux at Saint Ildefonſo; the wreſtling at Florence; the Gladiator of Borgheſe; and even the Pharneſian Hercules. All works differ in character, but nevertheleſs one knows that their authors never forget to unite them with beauty.

The ideas of Raphael are little ſuperior to the objects which he ſaw in nature, nor are they very exquiſite. Annibale was beautiful in the bodies of his men; Albano in the figures of his women; Guido Reni in the heads of the ſame, but more however in the forms; than the ſtyle.

Graceful Style.

Grace is a word equivalent with benificence, from whence it ariſes, that the objects which appear graceful are thoſe which by their appearance give an idea of that quality. In this ſtyle

the figures ought to have the motions moderate, eaſy, lovely, and more humble than arrogant. The execution ought not to be treated with much force, and ought to be alſo eaſy, ſoft, and varied, and without minutiæ.

This was the part which the Grecians confeſs to have been poſſeſſed in a ſuperior degree by Appelles; and although that artiſt was very modeſt, ſtill he gloried in poſſeſsing it; ſaying with ingenuity, that others ſurpaſſed him in ſome parts but that he conquered in grace. The idea which the ancients had of grace was very different from that which we have of it; becauſe in compariſon with theirs, ours is a kind of affectation which cannot ſubſiſt in perfect beauty without embarraſsing it; conſiſting in certain geſtures, actions, and difficult poſtures, unnatural, or violent, or at leaſt like thoſe of children, as we ſee ſometimes in great Correggio himſelf, and more in Parmigianino, and in others who have followed that track. In the ancients there was not that grace; it was a character to give the ſame idea of beauty which beauty gives of perfection, by preſenting the pleaſing parts of beautiful objects. The moſt beautiful Grecian examples of that ſtyle, are the Venus of Medicis, the Apollo, the Hermaphrodite of the villa of Borgheſe, and that which remains antique of the beautiful Cupid of the ſame villa; as alſo a Nymph in the collection of San Ildefonſo, and in various other ſtatues. Raphael poſſeſſed true Grace in the motions of figures; he wanted however a certain elegance in the

forms and contours, and his execution is in general too powerful and determinate.* Correggio may ſerve as an example in the contours, clare obſcure, and in all that which is comprehended under the term of execution. He poſſeſſed in an eminent degree, that part of which Appelles ſo much gloried when he praiſed Protogenes, ſaying that he was equal to him in every thing, but that he did not know how to take his hand off from a work; meaning that too much labour, and too much poliſh, takes from the grace of works, and are contrary to that ſtyle.

Significant and Expressive Style.

Significant ſtyle is that which has expreſsion for its principal end. Its execution requires determination, and concluſion.

Raphael may ſerve in that as a perfect example, being never in that part ſurpaſſed by any one. The ancient Grecians prefered beauty to expreſsion, ſo much ſo, that they endeavoured not to brutalize the forms by alterations which

* Determinate execution ſignifies that which marks things to a certain point, and leaves the rest for imagination. The ſpectator as well as the reader likes to have ſomething left for ſupposition, and to ſuppose and find out of himself; from whence the author who exhausts on all sides his matter, disgusts the reader by mortifying his self-love, because he supposes him incapable of searching the consequences of himself; and a painter who marks things, and above all the expreſsion with too much force, causes the same effect and prejudice to beauty. Every extreme is vicious; but the greatest difficulty is to know how to choose and maintain the medium,

are generally occaſioned by the effects of violent affections.

Among the moderns no one has known how to give ſuch taſte to expreſsion as Raphael; who appears as if he had drawn the perſons themſelves which he repreſented. Others, alſo of the greateſt ability, appear as if they had drawn Comedians, who feign the paſsions they repreſent, and who repreſent the actions for the ſpectators, and not becauſe they felt the effects themſelves; ſo that it is an affectation, and not the internal ſentiment of the perſon. Some profeſsors of merit have ſhown grace only by ſome particular actions, and others not even this part, having made all their compoſitions cold, and inanimate. Raphael to the contrary is expreſsive in all caſes, and his execution correſponds in all the parts his ſtyle requires, as I ſhall explain in the deſcription of his paintings.

Natural Style.

Although painting ought to give an idea of natural things, I diſtinguiſh however under that term of natural ſtyle, thoſe woks in which Artiſts propoſe no other end but the ſame, without chooſing or improving the moſt exquiſite of nature itſelf, and that is underſtood when one ſpeaks of Naturaliſts in painting; which denomination ſignifies that ſuch artiſts have not known the art of improving their originals, or of chooſing the beſt of Nature; contenting them-

ſelves only with having known how to copy it as the occaſion has repreſented, or as they have generally found it.

It appears to me that one might compare this ſtyle of painting to the ſtyle of comic poetry, which uſes the artifice of poeſy, without employing poetical ideas. In this ſtyle have excellently ſucceeded ſome Dutch and Flemings, ſuch as Rembrant, Gerard Dau, Teniers, and others; but the beſt examples of that ſtyle are the works of James Velaſquez; and if Titian is ſuperior to him in colouring, the Spaniards ſurpaſſed the Venetian by much in the knowledge of light and ſhade, as alſo in aerial perſpective, which are the moſt neceſſary parts in that ſtyle, becauſe by their means it gives an idea of truth, natural objects not being able to ſubſiſt without having relief and diſtance between them, and may be of the moſt beautiful or moſt ordinary colouring. Whoever would wiſh of this kind any thing more than is to be found in the works of Velaſquez, can only find it in nature itſelf; but he will find the moſt neceſſary parts in that author.

It will be eaſy to find that which correſponds with any ſtyle, when one conſiders, that the parts of imitation ought to be conſiſtent with the firſt idea propoſed by the artiſt; for which reaſon I ſhall paſs under ſilence different other ſtyles, more or leſs perfect, which refer to the one or the other before mentioned.

I fear I ſhall diſguſt too much a great number of Amateurs held as intelligent men, by

ſpeaking of the vicious ſtyles, admired much by him who has not a taſte ſo delicate as to diſcern the true excellence of great men, and takes a mere appearance for true merit; but theſe are much deceived, like many other admirers of Michael Angelo who take the loaded ſtyle for the true greatneſs of that maſter.

The affectation of ſome Lombardian painters appear as graceful to them as that of Correggio, and the ſame happens of all the affected ſtyles, which many praiſe, as if they were of the beſt taſte; in the mean time it is not at the moſt but an augmentation of accidental things, with which they arrive to give ſome idea to him who is capable of knowing the objects of nature by the parts or principal ſigns. The means adopted by artiſts of that ſtyle in giving pleaſure to Amateurs, is to augment the beauty of the local tints of all the bodies, and of their variety; the force and contrapoſition of the clare obſcure, and the chimerical diſpoſition of the maſſes of light and ſhade where one cannot find it natural; ſo that ſuch works are executed more for the eye than the reaſon. Many have practiced this ſtyle who are held as great men, particularly out of Italy, whoſe names I reſpect for their merits in other parts of the art, ſuch as in the fertility and abundance of their genius, and in the ſuperior talent with which they have known how to conquer and deſpiſe the greateſt difficulties, and to content themſelves with the value of ſome parts more eaſy, without regarding the cenſure of intelligent men.

Easy Style.

Some profeſſors have followed a ſtyle ſufficiently eaſy, and of much facility, without being totally vicious; ſuch as Peter of Cortona and his School, in which was diſtinguiſhed Lucas Giordano his diſciple. Thoſe may be called painters of the eaſy, common, and popular ſtyles, and who have not inveſtigated perfection; contenting themſelves to give in all the parts of the art, a ſufficient idea to diſtinguiſh one thing from another, without, regarding their perfection; ſo that theſe moſt celebrated Artiſts have no other mode of ſtudy in their works, but ſuch as is ſufficient to make themſelves underſtood by vulgar amateurs, with very little ſtudy or application.

That which reſpects the practice of painting, comprehends five principal parts, which are deſign, clare obſcure, colouring, invention, and compoſition. In all works occur principally and abſolutely the three firſt; and all that which one makes in theſe parts one might prove if it be done well, or ill. It is not thus in the other two, which are much more arbitrary, and although they ought to be guided by reaſon, they avail notwithſtanding ſomething of opinions: from whence ariſes the difficulty of finding fixed rules to content every one; and ſince invention and compoſition regulate all the parts of choice, every one chooſes differently, and approves what he has choſen according to his genius.

Design.

To enter into a deſcripton of all the parts which deſign requires, would be a work very long, and not proper to this place. I ſhall only ſay that its perfection conſiſts in the corrections; that is, in the exact imitations of all the forms and manners in which they preſent themſelves to our ſight, and in knowing how to give them their correſpondent character; chooſing from nature that which agrees with the ſubject and object.

Clare Obscure.

The Beauty of Clare obſcure conſiſts in knowing how to imitate all the effects of light and ſhade in nature, and in giving to works, force, ſweetneſs, degradation, variety, and repoſe for the ſight, as well in the light as ſhade; and finally in making the Clare obſcure ſerve to expreſs the character of a work ſomewhat cheerful or grave.

Colouring.

The beauty of colouring requires a juſt imitation of local colours,* or of tones of colours of which any thing is tinted. This tone ought to

* Local Colour, is the proper and natural colour of things which one distinguishes among them.

be the ſame in the lights as in the ſhades and half tints, ſo that each colour or tint goes decreaſing according to its want of light, or the interpoſition of the air between the objects and our ſight. Finally, a colour ought to receive all the accidents which one ſees in nature, ſo as to produce a beautiful, lucid, rich, powerful, and ſoft colouring.

Invention.

Invention is the moſt exact part of painting, and the moſt natural to explain the talent of an artiſt. It is the poetry of painting. It is the firſt idea of a work, and the painter ought never to loſe ſight of it even in the laſt ſtroke of the pencil. It is not ſufficient that he forms good ideas, and that he fills a large canvaſs with many figures, if all theſe ſerve not to explain the principal object, and if all the complexion of the work does not expreſs and declare to ſpectators the ſubject of which one treats, preparing and diſpoſing the underſtanding of him who views the painting, by being mixed with the expreſsions and particular actions of the principal figures; without which it would avail nothing to give violent expreſsions and altered motions like thoſe who wiſh to appear inventors. Exceſs is the thing moſt contrary to good invention. To give an idea of that part, I ſhall deſcribe among a few, the painting of the Spassimo di Sicilia, when I treat of the Paintings of the Royal Palace.

Composition.

By compoſition in painting, one ought to underſtand the art of uniting with a good method, the objects which are choſen by means of invention. Theſe two parts ought always to be united; becauſe the beſt thoughts, and the moſt beautiful inventions would be diſagreeable without good compoſition. The beauty of that part depends principally upon the variety, contrapoſition, contraſt,* and on the diſpoſition of all the component parts of a work. With all that, invention has to regulate all the parts of the compoſition, to aſsign the quantity more or leſs which ought to enter into the painting, and the motive, or property of that which compoſes it.

Painting has been ſubject to changes, which all human things ſuffer; it has had its progreſs and decay; it returns to elevate itſelf to a certain degree, and then goes declining anew. It has not only experienced theſe changes, but has varied alſo in its fundamental reaſons; becauſe that which in one time has been its principal end, in another has been regarded as a part ſcarcely neceſſary.

* Contrast in painting, means a well distributed variety of all the parts. It is the contrary to repetition. If in a group of three figures, for example, one shows itself by the front, another by the back, and the other by the side, they will have a good contrast. Each figure, and each member ought to contrast with others of its group, and each group with others of the painting. There is contrast even in colours.

I give for ſuppoſition, that in no nation had painting exiſted, in a form of the art, before that of Greece, and that no others had exalted it to ſo high a degree of perfection as them. Theſe genius's cultivated it with other reaſons, and with a ſtyle different from the moderns, although the imitation of nature has been always the principal end of all.

The ancients regarded beauty ſo much, that only the beautiful part of nature appeared to them worthy of imitation; ſo that one may be aſſured it has been thoſe who have formed and maintained the ſtyle of beauty. The vaſt attention which the greateſt artiſts paid to the perfection of that part, was retained in the thoughts of thoſe grand compoſitions of which the modern authors are ſo proud. In fact, the moſt celebrated paintings of Polignotus, Zeuxis, Parraſius, and Apelles were of few figures. Their inventions, although ingenius, were not abundant in objects, and from thoſe which remain, we may conjecture, that their moſt copious compoſitions explained more the particular excellence of each figure, than the unity of the whole. One may yet adduce another reaſon by which the ancient painters filled not their paintings full of figures; which is, that a beautiful and perfect object requires ſpace to ſhow itſelf to advantage, it being certain that many objects weaken the enjoyment of the principal perfection.

When the Grecian painters advanced their art ſo much as to merit the attention of philoſo-

phers, they aimed to ſeek excellence in the imitation of nature; but of perfect nature; from whence they did not exact ſo much a number of objects, as their perfection. In this manner they advanced the art by degrees from the fifteenth Olympiad to the nineteenth, in which time they found the greateſt ſubtilty, nor remained any thing to add except that grace, which, as I have ſaid, is not naturally perfection, or beauty, but gives the idea of the laſt, by repreſenting it to the mind in that ſtate of repoſe* which facilitates the comprehenſion of him who views it. This part was reſerved for the great Apelles, who flouriſhed in the 112th Olympiad. He beſtowed on the art all its completion, perfecting all that which his predeceſſors had invented; and all thoſe who came after him, wiſhing to proceed otherwiſe, fell into uſeleſs novelty, minutiæ, brilliancy of colours and caprices.

When painting returned almoſt to its firſt being in the 14th century, the world was found in great ignorance, and with little philoſophy, ſo that the firſt painters were employed to paint images without having any regard to beauty or perfection.

* The sight finds quiet and REPOSE in a work when there is no confusion in it, and when the colours and clare obscure are well understood, and gradated in a manner that the eyes and the understanding can comprehend the idea of the painter with ease, and without fatigue. A painting where the author exhausts all his subject, and loads it too much with objects, or where by studying variety, he has ill understood the collocation of the colours, will cause an effect contrary to that repose of which we speak. The LOGGE, improperly called of RAPHAEL, is a good example of confusion, because there is too much of every thing in it.

In Italy, where it was principally renewed, they painted entire façades for churches, chapels, and church-yards, repreſenting myſteries of the paſsion of Our Lord, and of other ſimilar things; from whence, even from the beginning, the art inclined to a ſtate of abundance and ſuperfluity, rather than perfection; and even till now the ſyſtem is not changed, as painting ſerves to content the vulgarity of riches and power, more than philoſophy and good taſte; quite the contrary to that which happened among the Grecians. Thus it follows, that painters ſeek not perfection, but abundance and facility, becauſe perfection is but for few, and the reſt is attainable to all, even to the moſt ignorant, who at preſent are the legiſlators of taſte.

Since nothing in this world is conſtant, and men are extravagant in their ideas, by exalting that which is low, and abaſing that which is high, painters could not do leſs than ſeek new modes to ſurpaſs one another, and, by that, they have proceeded by adding ſome theorical parts to that barbarous practice in which they began.

The firſt part they found was perſpective, by the knowledge of which, and that of foreſhortning, they put themſelves in a ſtate to advance more their inventions.

Domenico Ghirlandajo, of Florence, was the firſt, who, by means of that part, improved the mode of compoſition, and placing the figures in groups, and diſtinguiſhing the drapery by juſt gradations, he gave profundity to his com-

poſitions. In ſpight of all that, he did not dare to dilate his compoſitions as his ſucceſſors have practiſed.

Towards the end of the 14th century were born ſome men of ſuperior talents, ſuch as Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Giorgione, Titian, Father Bartholemy of ſaint Mark, and Raphael. Leonard found much ſubtilty; Michael Angelo with the ſtudy of the ancient fragments, and with the Knowledge of anatomy enlarged the ſtyle of deſign, with the forms. Giorgione of Caſtlefranco enlarged it alſo in general, and in particular gave to colouring the greateſt vivacity, which his predeceſsors had not done. Titian with a more ſubtile imitation of nature, found perfection in the tones of colouring. Father Bartholemy, making drapery his particular ſtudy, found the mode of dreſsing well the figures, following the relief of the naked by means of clare obſcure. Raphael. endowed with a more natural, and determinate talent for painting, ſtudied his predeceſſors and contemporaries, and appropriating the moſt excellent of all, according to the conveniency of expreſsing the truth of nature, he formed a ſtyle the moſt perfect and univerſal of all the modern painters who have been before or after him; and if he were excellent in all the parts of the art, he was incomparably more ſo in compoſition and invention; and I believe it would have ſurpriſed the Grecians themſelves if they had ſeen the great works of the Vatican, where unite abundance,

and ſo much perfection, with ſtudy, elegance, and eaſe.

As among the Grecians painting had acquired the higheſt perfection by means of Zeuxis, and Paraſius, and that the great Apelles, as I have ſaid, had only to add grace, apparently, alſo, among the moderns, nothing was deficient in painting after Raphael, except thatGrace which Anthony Allegri added, who accompliſhed all that which the ſtyle of modern painting could deſire; ſurpriſing the underſtanding of the intelligent, and the ſight of every one.

After theſe great painters there was an interval, until the Caracci's of Bologna, ſtudying the works of their predeceſſors, and principally thoſe of Correggio, formed a new School, and became the firſt, and moſt happy among the Imitators. Hannibal was the moſt correct imitator, and reunited the ſtyle of the ancient ſtatues with the grandeur of Lewis, but he diſpiſed the ſubtilty of the art, and philoſophical reflections. From theſe Caracci's, was formed a ſchool of many able men, and all followed the ſame track, except Guido Reni, who had a great talent and much eaſe, and introduced in painting a pleaſing ſtyle, compoſed of beauty, grace, richneſs and eaſe. Guercino of Cento, was inventor of another particular ſtyle of clare obſcure, which was compoſed of ſpots, contrapoſition, variety, and of interruptions of all the clare obſcure.

After theſe great men, who imitated with much eaſe the appearance of the perfection of the firſt, and of nature, came Peter of Cortona who

found yet too much difficulty to accomodate himself to these styles, and possessing a great natural talent, he applied himself principally to the part of composition, and to that which is called TASTE. Until this time, all compositions had had a kind of symmetry, or be it disposition, regulated according as the equilibrium, and invention of the history required; but Peter of Cortona almost separated the invention of the composition, valuing much more of those parts which delight the sight; as are the contraposition and contrasts of the members of the figures, so that then was introduced the custom of filling paintings with a croud of figures, well distributed, without thinking whether they suited the history or not; which is diametrically opposite to the practice of the ancient Greeks, who used to employ few figures, in order that their perfection might be more visible: those of the school of Cortona, to the contrary, used many figures in order that their imperfections should not be so palpable. Of this last school, there are very many of the same sentiments, which have changed the character of painting.

A little after came Carlo Maratti, who, aspiring to perfection, fought it in the works of other painters and particularly in those of the Caracci's. Although he applied all his study to be natural, one knows by himself that he was in the preoccupation of not following his own simplicity. This maxim he extended to all the parts of the art; and, with that, has given to his school, (which has been the last

at Rome,) a certain ſtyle of nicety and affectation.

France alſo has had ſome great men, particularly in compoſition, in which Nicholas Pousin was, after Raphael, him who moſt imitated the ſtyle of the ancient Greeks. Charles le Brun was abundant: different other Frenchmen were men of merit; and whilſt their ſchool did not depart from the Italian maxims, it produced many good profeſſors, who remained famous in many parts of the art; but there ſoon appeared ſome, who, preferring the magnificent works of Rubens which were exiſting at Paris, to the perfect works of Raphael, imitated in part the pleaſing objects which nature offered in France, with the maxims of Rubens, and they formed a ſtyle which pleaſes for novelty and brilliancy, to which that nation is inclined, and abandoned the Italian taſte, forming a national ſtyle, in which, what they call ESPRIT makes the eſſential part. From that time they no longer painted either Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, or Barbarians as Pouſsin had done, but always Frenchmen; and thus they pretended to expreſs by them the characters of any other nations.

That which I have thought of the other ſchools you may draw from the deſcription which I ſhall give of the works of their beſt artiſts.

Although the little I have ſaid will not be ſufficient to give a compleat idea of the art, yet I fear that to you it will appear too long for the ſhort deſcription which I ſhall give of the paintings of his Majeſty.

I would wiſh that in that Royal Palace could be found the account of all the other valuable paintings which are in the other Royal ſeats, and that they were diſpoſed in a gallery, worthy of ſo great a monarch, to be able well or ill to form a diſcourſe that from the moſt ancient painters which we have any account of, one might guide the underſtanding of the curious even to the laſt who have merited any praiſe: I could then make comprehenſible the eſſential difference which paſſes between them, and I could give by that more clearneſs to the ideas; but the court not having ever thought of forming a ſeries of painting, I ſhall ſpeak unconnectedly of the artiſts of different times, beginning by the beſt Spaniſh authors, whoſe works are placed in the principal rooms of that Royal Palace.

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS

OF THE

ROYAL PALACE

AT

MADRID.

IN the hall where the King dreſſes, are placed the major part of the ſaid paintings; particularly of the three authors, James Velaſquez, Ribera, and Morillo. But what difference between them! what knowledge and truth of clare obſcure do we not find in Velaſquez! how well he underſtood the effect which the air has when interpoſed between the objects, to make appear diſtant the one from the other! and what ſtudy for any profeſſor who would wiſh to conſider the paintings of that author exiſting in

the ſaid hall,(executed at three different times,) and the manner which ſhows the way held by him to arive to ſuch excellence in the imitation of nature! The painting of the AGUADOR of Seville, ſhows, how much painters ſubjected themſelves in the beginning to natural imitation, by finiſhing all the parts, and giving them that force which appears as if one ſaw the model, conſidering the eſſential difference which there is between the parts illuminated, and ſhade, ſo that that ſame imitation of the natural ſtyle made them give into that which was a little harſh and dry.

In the painting of the falſe Bacchus, who crowns ſome drunkards, one ſees a ſtyle more open and free, becauſe it imitates truth, not as it is, but as it appears. Yet one obſerves a great eaſe and dexterity in the forge of Vulcan, where ſome of the ſmiths are a perfect imitation of nature. But where, without doubt, he gave a juſt idea of the ſame nature, is, in the painting of the Spinners, which is in his higheſt ſtyle, and done in a manner which appears not to have received any part from execution, but only from deſire; in this ſtyle it is a ſingular work. Beſides theſe paintings, there are ſome portraits of Velaſquez of the ſame ſtyle, which were the moſt beautiful he ever did.

Ribera is admirable in the imitation of nature, in the clare obſcure, in the touch of the pencil, and in ſhewing the accidents of the body, the wrinkles, the hair of the body, &c. His ſtyle is always powerful, but does not equal Velaſquez in the knowledge of light and ſhade,

being deficient in the gradations, and ambient air; although in the colouring he is more forcible and brilliant, as the paintings of the Sopraportes plainly ſhow.

Of Morillo, there are paintings in that chamber of two different ſtyles. The firſt are the Incarnation, and the Nativity of Our Lord, which, eſpecially the ſecond, are painted in a maſterly ſtyle, and with a force conformable to nature, although they were done before he acquired that ſweetneſs which characteriſes his ſecond ſtyle, as one diſcovers in other paintings of that chamber, and namely in the little one of the marriage of the Virgin Mary, and in a moſt beautiful half figure of Saint James, placed in a contiguous anti-chamber.

In the converſation room of the King, there is an excellent work of Velaſquez which repreſents the Infanta Donna Margarita Maria of Auſtria, when the aforeſaid Velaſquez drew her, but that work being ſo famous for its excellence, I will not ſay more than that it can convince that the effect occaſioned by the imitation of nature, is that which ſerves to content every claſs of people, above all, where one makes not the principal account of beauty.

For the preſent, I will refrain from ſpeaking of the many excellent paintings of Titian, diſperſed through every part of the palace, to ſay ſomething of the ſuperb portrait of Velaſquez, in which he repreſented Philip IV. on horſeback, in an admirable ſtyle, as well for the figure of the King, as the horſe, and the field itſelf, is

touched* with the greateſt taſte, but above all is ſingular the eaſy and determinate ſtyle with which the head of the king is painted, and which ſeems to brighten the ſkin; and all, even to the hair, which is moſt beautiful, is executed with the greateſt legerity. By the ſide of that painting is another of the Count Duke of Olivarez ſcarce any thing inferior to that of the King aforeſaid.

We now proceed to obſerve the moſt beautiful painting of the ſame author, repreſenting the Surrender of a Fort, which painting was originally placed in the RETIRO of the chamber of kingdoms, and is now in the chamber where the Prince of Aſturias dines. This painting contains all the perfection of which the ſubject was capable, nor is there a thing, except the ſpear and the lance, which is not expreſſed with the greateſt majeſty. In the ſame chamber is the portrait of the Infanta Donna Margarita Maria, and that of an Infant on horſeback, both executed by Velaſquez in his beſt ſtyle, with other portraits from his hand, which likewiſe here placed.

In the dreſsing chamber of the Prince, are

* Touch in terms of painting, ſignifies the managing the pencil and colours. Every object one ſuppoſes to see at a certain diſtance, of course ought to loſe the minutiæ which one sees when near. The hair, for example, one cannot see or represent divided as it is, and for that reason painters represent it in a maſs. This maſs is to be done in a certain manner which depends upon its style and election. From whence we say that a painter TOUCHES in such, or such a style. In short this diſtinguiſhes the powerful ſoft, easy, delicate, grand touch, &c.

three beautiful paintings of Ribera, one of Saint Jerom, and a fellow of Saint Benedict, painted in his moſt clear ſtyle, in which one ſees the moſt beautiful touches of the pencil, the moſt exact imitation of nature, and of an expreſsion not general in the face of Saint Benedict. The other, repreſenting the Martyrdom of a Saint, is alſo excellent, although of a ſtyle more powerful.

It would be ſuperfluous to ſpeak of all the paintings of Rubens, and his ſchool, which are in ſo great a number in that palace. One, however, is remarkable, which repreſents the adoration of Kings; a work truly of the firſt claſs among thoſe of that author. He painted it in Flanders, after his beſt ſtyle, and when he came to Spain, he added more canvaſs, in order to make the painting larger, and to augment the figures, among which he did his own portrait. This painting has all the beauty of which its author was capable in hiſtorical ſubjects, and the deſign has fewer retouches than the others.

Among the different paintings of Vandyke, there is one very beautiful, which repreſents Chriſt in the Garden, painted with great taſte, and good colouring, as far as the ſubject permitted it in a ſcene by night. The portrait, of half figure, of the Cardinal Infant, is likewiſe excellent for its truth and colouring; and for being of a touch the moſt eaſy, ſoft, and limpid.

The paintings of Lucas Giordano are almoſt infinite, and one might ſay that he has never made a thing abſolutely bad, becauſe one

always finds in his works a certain taſte, but after the manner of an embryo of the excellent things done by celebrated men in the ſchools of Italy. He never arrived to perfection in any thing; from whence it ariſes that his ſtyle has not been able to ſuffer any diminution without falling into the moſt ordinary ſtyle of painting; it was formed in that degree which he wiſhed to follow. The works of Lucas Giordano, are, generally ſpeaking, of two kinds, although he made them various by imitating one and another particular painter. Some of his paintings are of a powerful colour, imitating ſomething Ribera, of whom he learnt the profession in his firſt years, but his more general ſtyle, and moſt natural to his character, which one obſerves in his beſt works, is that which he took from Peter of Cortona. After this ſtyle is the ſuperb work in freſco of the CASONE DEL RITIRO, and many other paintings in the palace; but in other works which he did at Madrid, he fell off ſomething from that ſtyle, by mixing dreſsed figures in his works, after the manner of Paolo Veroneſe, and, painting with more feeble tints, and much clare obſcure, with that he formed a ſtyle more heavy, as one may ſee in ſome Hiſtories of Solomon, which are in that Palace, done after he painted the work of the Eſcurial.

Among other paintings of the ſame Palace, there is one of a Madonna of half figure, with the child and Saint John, which to ſome appears of Raphael: in fact the child is almoſt all taken from that author; the fleſh of the figures is rather red; the field and the country incline to blue; the robe

of the madonna is of a carmine colour, rather clear, and the mantle is of a dark blue; all things characteriſtic of Raphael; and by that, he, who does not know the eſſential beauty of that author, may be deceived by the imitation of Giordano. Other paintings of his in the ſame palace, imitate the Venetian ſtyle; not however to that perfection which ſome ſuppoſe.

One might reckon as works of great conſideration ſome paintings of Tintoretto, of the Old Palma, and of James of Baſſano, but all, in my opinion, are eclipſed by that of Paolo Veroneſe, and more eſpecially by ſome of Titian of his beſt ſtyle; great painters, who were never ſurpaſſed, nor even equalled by any in the knowledge and perfection of colouring. There is ſuch an excellence in their works in this part of painting, that in no manner can one diſcover their artifice; the whole appearing as pure and native truth. Titian was wonderfully eaſy in the touch of the pencil, nor ever negligent; even his touches are well deſigned. The effect and the force of the clare obſcure in his paintings, does not conſiſt on the obſcurity of the ſhade, or in the clearneſs of the lights, but in the diſpoſal of the local colours.

All the aforeſaid qualities one may ſee executed in the moſt beautiful Bacchanal, whoſe figures are a third part of the ſize of nature. This painting is at preſent preſerved in the chamber of the Princeſs. Each part in particular, and the whole together, are ſo beautiful, that it would require a length of time to de-

ſcribe them. I can only ſay that I never paſs before that painting without remaining aſtoniſhed with admiration at that ſleeping female placed in the firſt ſtage, occaſioning in me as much novelty as if I had never ſeen it before. The colouring of that figure is the moſt clear that Titian ever uſed; the degradation of the tints is ſo wonderful, that I have never ſeen a thing of the kind ſo beautiful in the world; nor does one diſtinguiſh them but by comparing with great attention the one with the others, each ſingly appears as living fleſh, and the infinite variety of the whole is ſubject to the idea of one tone only. In each of the figures, the local tints of the fleſh is varied with the greateſt propriety, and even the drapery is beautiful of colours. Paſsing to the acceſſory parts, the ſky with clear clouds, the green trees of various ſhades, the fields covered with herbs, and the whole together have vivacity without ever departing from the perfect imitation of nature.

The painting, almoſt of the ſame ſize, which repreſents a feaſt of a great number of children at play with fruits, which they had gathered from the trees, is alſo of the greateſt beauty, of a very finiſhed ſtyle, and appears done almoſt at the ſame time of the other. It is wonderful to ſee ſo much diverſity in the infants, and in their hair which is almoſt all black and curled, but above all is the great artifice of the degradation of the tints, and the finiſh which loſes itſelf by little and little in the more diſtant objects.

Theſe two paintings were in Rome in the

houſe of Lodoviſi, and were made a preſent of to the king of Spain. The ſame according to Sandrart ſerved as a ſtudy to learn how to make the beautiful children of Dominichino, Pouſsin, and of the Fleming. Albano availed himſelf of it in his painting of a little group of theſe children, who are dancing. In the Palace are two copies which Rubens did of that painting, but one might conſider them as a book tranſlated into the Flemiſh language, which conſerves all the thoughts, but loſes all the grace of the original.

There are many other paintings of the ſame Titian, all however done afterwards, and ſome in his old age, when from decayed ſight he neglected the clearneſs of his pencil, yet always preſerving the excellence of the tints. Notwithſtanding, it has cauſed much injury to painting that Titian has left ſo many works of this claſs executed with negligence; becauſe many painters have imitated that mode without recollecting that Titian had known how to paint more finiſhed, and made firſt a great ſtudy in all the beautiful principles and fundaments of the art, although he was ſuperior in colouring, in which he ſurpaſſed every one.

There are but few paintings which we can enumerate of Correggio, but every thing painted by that great man has all the enchantment of the art. Although there are only two of them there, they are enough to give a ſufficient idea of the greatneſs of that artiſt. The Madonna who dreſſes the Child, with Saint

Joſeph at a diſtance, appear done after the manner of a ſketch, by the many eſſential variations which one diſcovers done by the author in the poſtures of the Child and the Madonna. It is ſurpriſing that a minor figure of two palms ſhould have ſuch effect at any conſiderable diſtance, appearing that it exceeds its meaſure; this however does not ariſe ſo much from the force of the clare obſcure, as from the imperceptible half-tints, which paſs from the light to the ſhade and from the ſingular artifice of treating one with the other, with which they expreſs in ſuch a manner the relief and the form that it gives almoſt a contradiction to its being a plain ſurface.

If Titian was ſingular in the tints and local colouring of any thing he repreſented, Correggio, although leſs perfect in that part, ſurpaſſed him infinitely in particular relief, in the ENTRATE AND USCITE of each body and of it's parts, as alſo in the artifice of ærial perſpective not only regarding the objects diminiſhed by clare or obſcure in the interpoſed diſtance, but alſo by certain knowledge of the nature of the air, which being matter, more or leſs tranſparent, is filled with light, and paſsing through the bodies communicates it to the ſame in thoſe parts where the rays of light could not paſs direct, and thus formed that ambiency which diſtinguiſhes objects even in the ſhade, and makes one comprehend the diſtance which there is between the one and the other. This part was perfectly underſtood

by the ancient Greeks, as one may obſerve in the paintings of Herculaneum, even in the moſt ordinary; from whence one knows it to have been at that time a precept of the ſchool. Among the moderns, the moſt celebrated in that point were Correggio, Velaſquez, and Rembrant.

Returning to our painting, the Child is a moſt perfect thing, not only from the knowledge of the clare obſcure, but alſo for the colouring, impaſting, deſign, and the higheſt grace. Correggio intended to produce wonders in the foreſhortening, and to make it that theſe contours ſhould ariſe in the ſame form of the body; a thing extremely difficult, and executed only in an equal degree by Michael Angelo, and Raphael. The Grecians conſidered this as the moſt difficult part of Painting, as Pliny refers in Lib. xxxv. Cap. 10. ſpeaking of Parraſius in theſe terms; "Becauſe to paint bodies, and that which is "within them, although it is certainly a great "thing, yet many have ſucceeded in it; but to "make the contours, and terminate the things "which they comprehend, is a merit which few "painters have had, becauſe the laſt lines ought "to be made in a manner that they appear to em-"brace and enfold things, ſhowing the ro-"tundency of them, and that they extend fur-"ther than the eye can diſtinguiſh."

The other painting, which repreſents the Prayer of our Lord in the Garden, is alſo ſmall, but a compleat and ſtudied work. At firſt ſight, one diſtinguiſhes only Chriſt with the Angels,

by the air of their brightneſs, all the reſt remaining in nocturnal ſhade; then conſidering it well, one finds divinely expreſſed the ambient, and the degradations which natural objects make when ſeen by little light; ſo that we know the near objects, whilſt the diſtant ones are not diſcoverable to our ſight. One ſcarcely diſtinguiſhes the men who are going to ſeize our Lord, nor is there a touch, or ſenſible ſtroke of the pencil in the trees, until where the apoſtles are; but according as one advances the things more to the light, one begins to diſtinguiſh the foliage, herbs, a trunk with the crown of thorns, and the croſs on the ground.

The ſplendor of the face of Chriſt, illuminates all the painting; but the ſame Saviour receives the light from above, as if from Heaven, reflecting it to the angels, who receive it from him. This idea, which is very natural and beautiful, is executed with that perfection of which its author only was capable. At preſent theſe paintings are in the ſame cabinet of the Princeſs, where are alſo the aforeſaid of Titian. Here are alſo ſome things of Leonardo da Vinci. Of his beſt ſtyle is one painting which repreſents two children playing with a lamb, not very well executed, and another which carries the ſole head of the young ſaint John. In theſe paintings, one ſees the great ſtudy which the author makes upon light and ſhade, that is, upon that degradation which there is from the greateſt light to the greateſt obſcurity, obſerving alſo certain

graceful, and laughing geſtures, which appear to have opened the way to Correggio to arrive to that grace which one ſees in his works.*

One finds alſo in this cabinet ſome paintings ſuppoſed to be of Raphael. Of his invention there is a Holy family with figures half the ſize of nature, and it appears done from his deſign by one of his firſt Diſciples. There is another little painting of Madonna of half figure, with the child, of the ſame compoſition of the famous painting at Florence, known under the name of MADONNA DELLA SEGGIOLA, with the difference that in the one of which we ſpeak, does not appear St. John, and it is of a ſquare form, in the mean time the other is rotund, with figures almoſt as large as nature. This little painting of the Palace appears to have been in part repainted by the ſame Raphael, but more after the mode of a ſketch than a finiſhed work. The head of Madonna in particular, is all his, and is full of life and expreſsion; it is, finally, equal to any other of his beſt works.

But how ſhall I explain myſelf ſufficiently and in a manner moſt worthy of the beautiful painting known by the name of the SPASIMO DI SICILIA? you know that Raphael painted it at Rome to ſend it to Sicily, to be placed in the Church of MADONNA DELLO SPASIMO. This work, according to Vaſari, was loſt in the ſea, but was recovered without receiving any damage.

* Among the paintings which passed from Modena to the Gallery of Dresden, there is one of Correggio, which represents the Madonna, whose head is very similar to the style of Leonard.

In all ages it has been much admired by truly intelligent men: Agoſtino of Venice engraved it, however without giving an idea of its beauty. The Count Malvaſia ſpeaks of it in diſpraiſe, but his ſame writings ſhows him of little judgment in the excellence of paintings, and he conſides in the relation of ſome painters, perhaps thoſe, who by their great inferiority to Raphael, could not diſcern the merit of that great man, nor the true reaſons for which they ought to value the works of famous artiſts.

It appears to me indubitable, that the part moſt noble in painting is not that which ſolely delights the ſight, and renders a work pleaſing to men who are in fact ignorant of the art, but that thoſe parts are the moſt valuable which ſatisfy the underſtanding, and content thoſe who know how to make uſe of the faculties of the mind. It being thus, (of which I am perſuaded) Raphael is without doubt the greateſt painter among all thoſe whoſe works have been preſerved to our time. The inventions and conceptions of his paintings, give at firſt ſight an idea of that which he would make comprehenſible to the underſtanding of thoſe who view him. By that, his ſubjects are tranquil, tumultuous, ferocious, or amiable, cheerful or melancholy, not containing any thing contrary to that idea, and, give the perfect ſignification of the ſubjects; by which means he moves our intellects, and acquire above all, power, and authority, like Poetry and Oratory.

Beſides this, in each of his figures one ſees

expressly that which he did before that act, and one almoſt comprehends that which he preciſely ought to do after. We ſee none of the actions entirely compleat; on the contrary, all are in action, a little after it is begun, or a little before it is finiſhed; and it is that which gives them ſuch life, that to look at them attentively, they appear moving. In fact, if we wiſh to examine the preſent painting in all the aforeſaid parts, we ſhall know, that if Raphael had not been always ſo great in his time, one might ſay, this would be ſingular for its great beauty.

You already know that the ſubject of this painting is taken from Scripture, when, carrying Jeſus Chriſt the Croſs to mount Calva; the women in ſeeing it, burſt into tears, and he, as a Prophet, tells them not to weep for him, but for their children; thus announcing the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Raphael, to make more comprehenſible this painting, ſhews, at a diſtance, Mount Calva, which one aſcends by a winding path, that turns to the right hand out of the door, whence it is ſuppoſed our Lord fell at the firſt turn of the ſame road, from which ſide he is drawn by a Ruffian with a cord with which he tied him.

It is ſuppoſed that this painting having been done for the Church of MADONNA DEL DOLORE, the patrons wiſhed that the painter would introduce Madonna in it; although it is alſo poſsible that the idea was his own: However it might be, Raphael knew on all occaſions how to find a mode the moſt noble, decorous, and

expreſsive, to repreſent whatever may be the ſubject.

Wiſhing to figure in that painting the mother of a perſon who was conducted to the place of execution, and treated without compaſsion by the miniſters, he choſe the moſt unhappy ſtate of a mother, who, to aſsiſt her ſon, is neceſsitated to ſupplicate the infamous crowd to have pity upon him! In that ſtate Raphael painted the Madonna, who being on her knees, does not ſee her ſon, and who of herſelf could give him no ſuccour, but in the act of the moſt efficatious ſupplication manifeſts, that having fallen to the ground he has occaſion of the commiſeration of ſome one to raiſe him up. To this expreſsion of humility in the Virgin, the painter gave nobleneſs, by painting at her ſide the Magdalen, ſaint John, and the other Marias, who accompany her and ſuccour her, ſupporting her under the arm.

Theſe perſons are repreſented full of grief for the ſufferings of our Lord; particularly the Magdalen, who appears almoſt as if ſhe were ſpeaking to Jeſus. Saint John is ſuccouring the Virgin Mary. One ſees Jeſus Chriſt fallen; not weak however or worn down; but in the act of menacing with his words, as the Evangeliſt relates; and his aſpect beſides being in that painting of a beauty and excellence almoſt incomprehenſible, manifeſts itſelf as inflamed with a prophetic ſpirit, which correſponds exactly with the divine perſon it repreſents, who is always divine although in ſufferings: It is admirable alſo for the propriety of Raphael, who never

meanly expreſſed any thing, when its character could, or ſhould be repreſented with nobility. The action of all the figure is animated and noble: The left arm, which with his beautiful hand reſts upon a ſtone, is all ſpread; but in the folds of the large ſleeve he manifeſted a momentaneous act, appearing as if they were yet in air, and had not finiſhed their fall according to the inclination of their weight. With the right hand, our Saviour embraces the croſs which is fallen upon him, nor does he wiſh it ſhould be taken away; on the contrary, he appears in the act of embracing it: a thought moſt worthy of the imagination of Raphael, who even in an action, which to many would appear indifferent, remembers that Jeſus ſuffered becauſe it was his will.

He is not leſs admirable in the variety of the characters, which he knew how to expreſs in the executioners; ſhowing that among the bad one meets with worſe. This figure, with his back turned, draws Jeſus Chriſt with a cord, and appears not to have had any other object but the brutal deſire of arriving with the ſufferer to the place of execution. The other, who ſuſtains in ſome manner the croſs, appears as if moved by a certain compaſsion, and that he would wiſh to raiſe up Jeſus Chriſt. At the ſide, is a Soldier who throws the croſs upon the ſhoulders of Chriſt, and raiſing the lance in the act of threatening him, expreſſes the greateſt iniquity in wiſhing even more to oppreſs our Lord already fallen.

All theſe reflections only tend properly to

invention, which in truth is that which makes noble the art of painting, and discovers the force of the understanding of the artist, who, when he arrives to that part of the excellence which Raphael obtained, merits the title of a great man, like great Poets and great Orators, It is necessary however to remark, that perfect invention does not consist only in a beautiful conception, or in a charming thought, but in that unity of progressive ideas which first fills and occupies the intellect of the professor, and then that of the spectators; and he ought to maintain the same ideas from the first disposition of the whole, even to the last stroke of the pencil, forming one only thing in the end of the work.

Many other artists, who, to common amateurs and vulgar painters appear inventors, have at least been entirely ignorant of the aforesaid parts possessed by the great Raphael, confounding, at every instant, invention with composition. Invention is the true poetry of painting, already formed in the mind of the painter, who then represents it as if he had seen it, or that the action he represents had happened before his eyes.

Composition, to the contrary, consists in the co-ordination of all the objects which enter in the aforesaid invention. By the equivocation introduced into the schools of painters, and the heads of amateurs, arises the belief that paintings are invented and composed only to please the sight by a diversity of objects, with various directions and contrapositions, forgetting

the part moſt noble, which is the ſignification appertaining to invention.

Some ignorant people have dared to ſay that Raphael was not a compoſer, becauſe they met but with the few images of the Madonna, and had never ſeen the magnificent works of the Vatican, nor thoſe of the acts of the Apoſtles, invented by him for a work of tapeſtry, which even in Madrid one can ſee and contemplate in the complete collection of the Duke of Alba. When, however, one could not obſerve theſe, nor the prints of Raphael, the ſole painting of which we ſpeak could convince any one of his eminent quality in this part. In fact, who knew better than him how to equilibrate * the compoſitions, to piramid † the groups, and to give the contraſt of an alternative motion to the members of the figures, with infinite variety of directions, ſo that all the parts of the divine work appear to be living? And who underſtood better the juſt quality of the figures which are ſuitable to a hiſtory, and to diſpoſe of them in a manner that none reſt idle or uſeleſs? If he uſed only moderation, and rarely certain violent motions, it was to ſubject every thing to expreſſion, and to paint the ſtate

* To EQUILIBRATE a composition means, that the objects ought to be distributed in a manner that they do not leave one part of the painting void, and the other full, and that this distribution appears natural, and never affected.

† To PIRAMID the groups, is to make the objects together form a piramid, that is, that it has a greater base than point. And that in any other form but that in which they are disposed, be it straight or circular, they will have a frightful effect.

of mind of the perſon he repreſented, it being very inconſiſtent that a thoughtful man ſhould have the ſame action of one who is fighting, running, or walking. So that the noble and the plebian, age and youth, and every diverſity of ſtate, natural and accidental, ought to be diſtinguiſhed in a good compoſition as Raphael has done; that being a part of invention.

Deſign is the moſt efficacious inſtrument which the painter has to explain the conceptions of his mind, and is alſo moſt beautiful in this painting, as in all the other works of Raphael; and if he in that did not arrive to the whole beauty of the Grecian ſtatues, it was by reaſon of the cuſtoms of his time being ſo different from that of the Grecians, as alſo the occaſions, and objects ſo different in which he exerciſed his talent.

If, however, the ancients had been under the neceſsity of deſigning an Executioner by the ſide of a Chriſt, certainly they would not have done it better, nor in any other mode than that which one ſees him with his back turned, in this painting. If the proportion of his ſtature required a man rough, and brutal, it would have been very improper to ſubſtitute in his place an elegant figure, like the Gladiator of Borgheſe, which claims to itſelf the attention more of Chriſt himſelf, as happens in the famous work of Domenechino in the chapel of St. Andrew, in the church of St. Gregory, at Rome, where all admire more the executioner who flogs the ſaint, than the figure of the ſaint himſelf, who ought

to have been the principal, and the hero of the hiſtory. The ſame defect has reigned, and ſtill reigns in almoſt all the paintings of the famous painters who flouriſhed from the beginning of the paſt age. Notwithſtanding, whoever would wiſh to ſee in the Ancients an example of character not always beautiful, ſhould obſerve the Grinder of Florence, and he certainly will not ſee in that figure the character of the Wreſtlers, the Silenus, and of the excellent Gladiator.

He who knows how to conſider the ſtyle of deſign of Raphael in that as well as in his other works, will find the ſame ſpirit of the ancients; that is, in having known how to comprehend and mark with preciſion and clearneſs, all the moſt eſſential parts of the conſtruction of the human body, leaving almoſt inviſible the things ſuperfluous and inſignificant. But that which above all occaſions aſtoniſhment in the deſign of Raphael is, that the character, of the perſon painted, correſponds ſo with the actions he repreſents, that effectively it appears as if one ſaw a man, who, not by chance, but by natural inclination did that in which Raphael repreſented him, and this one does not only obſerve in the countenance, from which one is uſed to know the mind of man, but alſo in the form of all the body, and its parts.

In a figure, whoſe back one ſees, he repreſented a man robuſt and rough, as are often idiots, and he gave him a proportionable action without expreſsing the particular intention. To the contrary, in the two afore-

ſaid, he expreſſed the mind in the faces, as a proportion more elegant than in the bodies. One obſerves, eſpecially in the Chriſt, the moſt beautiful countenance, with expreſsion the moſt lively, without altering in the leaſt part the regularity or nobleneſs of its phyſiognomy. Alſo all the principal parts of the bones and muſcles are marked there, but do not injure the greatneſs of the principal forms. This character one obſerves alſo in the neck, and hand on which he leans; and though this action of leaning preſſes the fleſh in a manner which almoſt hides the bones, and the joints, that, nevertheleſs, gives ſuch contour to the thumb, and to the other fingers, and ſo correſponds to the character of the head, as if it were executed by the moſt able Grecian artiſts, who had wiſhed to make a figure of a character between that of Jove and Apollo; which effectively ought to be that which correſponds with Chriſt, adding only the accidental expreſsion of the paſsions in which he is repreſented.

I will not be diffuſe in ſaying, how excellent is every little ſtroke of the pencil in the knowledge of foreſhortening, and the outlines, which are hid one within the other, according to the point of view, ſo that it appears to him who conſiders well that work, that in many places the ſight can penetrate within the ſurface. The turns of all the parts of the head according to the action and point of view, is executed as Raphael was accuſtomed. But it would be too long to ſpeak of every little obſervation, and

every merit that one meets with in that excellent man; and in general one ought to be perſuaded, that whenever in his works one finds any part executed with leſs excellence, one ſhould attribute it to ſome of his diſciples, and that he could not do more than retouch them on account of the many commiſsions which he had in his beſt time, and in conſequence, one ought not to conſider theſe parts as his.

After having ſeen and examined the moſt precious painting (for what regards the moſt noble part of the art) that is preſerved in the Royal Palace, and which contains in a moſt ſublime degree, the firſt conſiderations of painting, we ſhall proceed to ſee paintings in a ſtyle more eaſy, in which is abreviated all difficulty. I ſhall ſpeak of them, however, only in general.

The firſt works which offer are of Lanfranco, among which the funeral of an Emperor, with a combat of Gladiators is excellent. That work contains in itſelf only one appearance of things moſt excellent in the art. In the deſign, there is ſomething of that general idea of the conſtruction of the human body in which conſiſts the beauty of the ancients. It has part of the expreſsion of Raphael, as alſo of the maſs and eaſy clare obſcure of Correggio: this however is not executed entirely, but only indicated. There is a combat of boats, a ſacrifice, and other paintings of that author which are alſo beautiful.

There are here very many other paintings,

of various ſchools, but do not arrive to that excellence which is before mentioned. One meets with ſome of Pouſsin, and among theſe a Bachanal ſufficiently beautiful, whoſe figures are a little leſs than a foot in height. This is a work well finiſhed, of very good deſign and colouring, with ſome very graceful women and children, who are dancing. The country which forms the field of the painting is as beautiful as one could wiſh. This painting, deſtined for the cover of a harpſichord, was afterwards enlarged by the ſame Pouſsin, or by Gaſpar his brother-in-law.

It would be a deſirable thing that many young painters would ſtudy with application theſe beautiful examples of the arts which I have heretofore deſcribed, not only in copying them, but in imitating them; two things very different, becauſe all thoſe who copy a work of painting, are not by that made able to produce ſimilar things, if they do not apply themſelves, and purpoſe to follow the reaſons of the author of the original. This is the only means of drawing profit from the ſtudy of the things of others. Therefore, in all paintings, one finds two eſſential parts: one comprehends the reaſons of things, which we may call the traces left by the underſtanding of the artiſt; the other is the ſtyle of the work; that is, the habit of the execution of the author. Generally, thoſe who copy and pretend to ſtudy the works of great men, apply the principal care to imitate that appearance which I have called MODE;

and from whence it arifes, that the original being taken away, and fee themfelves in a neceſsity to compoſe a work in which occur other things and circumſtances different from that which they have copied, they find themfelves without a guide. But he who effectively ſtudys and obſerves the productions of great men with the true deſire of imitating them, makes himſelf capable of producing works which reſemble them, becauſe he conſiders the reaſons with which they are done; and in that manner, comprehending them, can adapt them to all things where they are ſuitable, and thus it makes him an imitator without being a plagiariſt.

From what I have ſaid, I conclude that the beginners of painting ought to apply themfelves to ſtudy well the works of great men, not however only to imitate them blindly, but to the end of finding out which are the parts of nature they have choſen to imitate, perſuading themſelves that nothing is good in their works if it be not conformable to nature. After having acquired a certain practice in copying the ſaid works, they ought to ſtudy the ſame in nature, and to obſerve what parts moſt reſemble the choice of the maſters whoſe works the ſtudy to copy. In that manner one will be enabled to follow whatſoever natural inclination one may have, and even although one does not arrive to equal the maſters one propoſes to imitate, following nature, one ſhall not fail of acquiring ſufficient merit and honor in the art; becauſe nature is ſo abundant and various in her productions that ſhe

offers to all talents parts proportioned to their capacity; and it is fufficient to imitate them with the reafons I have endeavoured to explain as well as I am able, and as my little practice of writing and the quality of this little work, will permit me, which finally is only a letter written with good will, and with little leifure to reduce it to the beft form, which unites with my confined abilities to render it more imperfect. From whence I intreat you to exculpate me with the public, and to fupply with fome explanations the obfcurity of my mode of expreffing myfelf; becaufe to give greater clearnefs to my ideas I fhould have occafion to extend them, and to write a book of precepts; a thing which on no account I would dare to undertake.

I humbly offer you this little which my occupations have permitted me, and in that which would be more ufeful than words and writings, command him who owes you every, eſteem and is, defirous to ferve you.

ARANJUEZ. 4th March 1776.

LETTER

FROM

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS,

TO A FRIEND.

UPON THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND DECAY,

OF THE

ART OF DESIGNING.

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THE result of our converſations reſpecting the art of deſigning, is the requeſt that you make me of writing my opinion upon its riſe progreſs, and decay. Very voluntarily would I do it, by diſcovering to you all that which by long experience and reflection I have learnt, if I could

believe it of any utility to others; but I am reſtrained by two obſtacles; the firſt is the diffidence I feel in finding I am unable to explain myſelf with that propriety neceſſary; the other is the impoſsibility of communicating to others a clear idea of theſe things without beginning by the moſt trivial precepts and elevating one ſelf gradually to the moſt ſublime; which would employ me in a very great work, ſuperior to my phyſical or mental powers. Yet, nevertheleſs, the will I have to oblige you, makes me ſet aſide every obſtacle in order to write ſomething, and ſhow you my ready obedience. I pray you however, to receive this letter as a proof of our friendſhip, and not as a treatiſe worthy to be given to the public.

The major part of human inventions are produced from neceſsity, except however what we call the fine arts, which are derived from the inclination a man has for imitation. The materials which are employed in these, exiſt in nature itſelf; and ſince ſhe contains things which in ſome manner reſemble one another, I believe that ſuch reſemblances have exited in men the deſire of ſupplying and adding the parts which are deficient, or defective, to make them more alike; and by theſe means of compariſon, they muſt have known how to find many things, which then they executed by the artifice of imitation.

To comprehend that which I have preſently to ſay, it is neceſſary that I ſhould explain what I mean by IDEA. By idea therefore I underſtand

that impreſsion which things leave in our brain, in the meantime the ſame impreſsion can return to the memory to repreſent the ſame preciſion. Theſe ideas are more or leſs clear and diſtinct according to the greater or leſſer intenſity with which our underſtanding receives them, and according to its capacity of diſtinguiſhing and determining the moſt eſſential parts of things. Few are the inventions which owe not their beginning to chance; that is, to that combination which we give this name, becauſe we are ignorant of its cauſe. The arts of deſign have apparently their origin, as I have ſaid, from the inclination and deſire of imitating things; from whence aroſe the PLASTICA; it being very natural that men firſt conceived the idea of imitating human figures, or of animals, with earth moulded together with the hands, and that then by chance, or by reflection, they baked them by the fire, to make them more hard and durable.

Hiſtory ſhows not, with preciſion, the progreſſion of this art; but it is very natural that it was thus, becauſe we know that even after the perfection of the arts, there have ſtill been people who uſed ſtatues of baked earth; and being beſides of the moſt remote antiquity the art of building with bricks, and giving them a certain form, and of baking them, it is very likely that in the ſame time came to men the idea of forming and baking figures of the ſame material. Some authors pretend that the Teraſins or houſhold Gods of Laban, ſtolen by Racheles, were Images of

baked earth: but I do not wiſh to amuſe myſelf in examining theſe facts of ſo great antiquity, in the knowledge of which, writers are ſo divided, and confuſed; and this muſt neceſſarily have happened from having all pretended to make the hiſtory of the arts exact, with the preoccupation of their having been invented in one only place, and by one only nation; which does not appear true, becauſe man being the ſame in all places, and having the ſame neceſsities, paſsions, and caprices, of courſe in all times and countries he had thought, and ſtill thinks, in the ſame manner, and had invented the ſame things.

Before I proceed I ſhall explain the word ART, I believe it is nothing more than the manner of producing any work with determinate means, and with a determinate end. The end of the Fine Arts is to delight by way of imitation, and the means are to order the imitative things in a manner that in the imitation they may have more order and clearneſs than the things themſelves; which produces beauty, and therefore the arts which have this object are called the FINE ARTS. Beauty in particular, is no more than a ſtyle of being in things, which by moſt ſimple means gives us a clear idea of their good and eſſential qualities. Many are of an opinion that among the fine arts ſculpture is the moſt ancient, becauſe it is that which moſt ſimply imitates the figure of things. It was invented at different times and places, but it appears they began to introduce it by way of worſhip,

which is called IDOLATRY. It might be alſo that it had a beginning ſtill more innocent, ſuch as ſeeking by means of images to conſerve the memory of perſons beloved, or of talents, or merit ſuperior to others, or perhaps to ſignify ſome quality of nature, by means of figures, in order to inſtruct the ignorant, as we know they practiſed in Egypt. That nation could not perfect theſe arts, although they practiſed them there for many ages, becauſe their religious worſhip oppoſed it, as it did not permit the artiſts to depart from the eſtabliſhed form of their Idols, and becauſe the claſs of Citizens who employed them were yet held as vulgar. To theſe reaſons they united others to impede the progreſs of the arts, and the principal one was, that the Egyptians, as well as the Caldeians, Arabs, and others who executed ſome figures, were too ignorant and unpoliſhed to be able to produce things which were not very vulgar. It is natural to man to have a propenſity and attachment for material things which fall under the ſenſes; and for that reaſon other nations who came afterwards, although they were in times more enlightened, followed the firſt inventors, nor did they ever entirely depart from their low ſtyle. The ſame has happened at the revival of the arts in Europe, as I ſhall ſay in its place.

When the arts of Deſign were introduced into ſome parts of Greece, and in others were invented, they preſently took the beſt form, as well becauſe theſe people had the beſt inſtruction, as becauſe they were of the greateſt

beauty. The firſt is proved by not having been before Homer flouriſhed in Greece, any ſculptor or painter of reputation; and the ſecond is atteſted by all Hiſtorians, and proved by experience. The works of that divine Poet ſhow that in his time the arts were not much advanced, becauſe the idea which he gives of them is very poor, and he ſays nothing that can be comparable to the poſterior works of the Greeks. He never mentions any ſtatue of marble; and when he ſpeaks of any productions of the arts, he adds always the richneſs and the ornaments; from whence I infer, that the idea which he had of their works, was that which he had taken from the Phenicians, who, by means of Commerce, diſſeminated them through the maritime countries.

When finally the Grecians began to cultivate deſign, they were already, in ſome Degree, a polite nation; for that reaſon they did not practice, like the Grecians and the other people aforeſaid, vulgarly following one an other, the Deſciple copying the maſter; but with philoſophical reaſons, they ſought the parts moſt noble, and the things moſt worthy to be imitated, and always adding one idea to another, they arrived to the higheſt degree of perfection,

One ought not to believe that the Grecians omitted the minutiæ of the art on account of being ignorant of it; becauſe we know that Dedalus, one of the moſt ancient ſculptors in wood, was held as ſingular in the expreſsion of the veins of the body, and in the fineneſs of

the work; but this method, originating from the mere imitation of nature, was ſoon abandoned by the Grecians, who conſidered that that which was of importance to give an idea of the human figure was the conſtruction and form of the body, by the greateſt and moſt eſſential parts. They ſaw that in compoſing a man entire, or a buſt, or parts which have articulation, their actions, and movements depend on diſtending the members from the body, or in contracting them; from whence they inferred, that the agility and eaſe of the motions, depend principally that the members be not heavy, but of ſuch a proportion as to be able to be moved by the muſcles moſt near. The ſight of, and the experience which they acquired by GYMNASTICKS, made them diſcover that perſons of a ſpacious thorax were moſt proper for exerciſe and fatigue; and according to theſe reflections they formed their figures with the moſt ſimple contours, giving only the clear and neceſſary idea of each member and part of the body, without letting the minutiœ appear, marking, however, with clearneſs, and determinately all the eſſential parts, and alſo with the moſt diſtinction thoſe which were real; but without exceeding the limits of poſsibility.

In this mode they invented and eſtabliſhed the way to a beautiful ſtyle, comprehending in their works the ſtructure of man, and his mechanism, better than that which is in nature itſelf. Proceeding thus, they added always the greateſt energy in their works, and dividing

always more the general parts, they found the grace and ſweetneſs of the art.

Perfection of beauty aroſe to the higheſt point by the hand of Phidia, in the time of Pericles, and the other parts, even to the Grace of the Arts, encreaſed even to the time of Alexander the Great, in which Praxiteles, and Policletus, elevated ſculpture to the higheſt degree of perfection. But, ſince all human thoughts and actions always tend to progreſsion, when the artiſts who ſucceded them wiſhed to join any thing to the perfection of their maſters, they formed no other expedient except adding the ſuperfluous to the eſſential; but the human underſtanding being limitted, they could not combine the one with the other, and as much as they introduced of the uſeful, they loſt in the neceſſary parts, and wanting thus the moſt important, the Art went backward in its perfection. Notwithſtanding this natural courſe of things, the art ſuſtained itſelf for a long time in Greece, and eſpecially in Athens, becauſe philoſophy, ſo natural to that nation, preſerved it from falling into trifling things, by leaving the greateſt and important, which happened to thoſe people who ſuffered themſelves to be deceived and led away by the pure delight of the ſight, and by that capriciouſneſs which we call Mode, and which has generally no other merit than that of not having exiſted in the preceding day.

Finally, it cauſed great peril to the arts when the Romans conquered Greece, but by good fortune, the conquerors were not ſuch barbarians

as to remain infenſible of the high magnificence and beauty of the Grecian works: ſo that, if by the force of their arms, with a government entirely military, and with the auſterity and almoſt fierceneſs of their cuſtoms they arrived to ſubject the Grecians, theſe, to the contrary, with the amenity of their genius, with the ſoftneſs of their manners, and with the beauty of their works, ſubjected, as one may, the Romans; who, as ſoon as they knew Greece, confeſſed themſelves barbarians, and conveyed their arts and artiſts to Italy, and employed themſelves to cultivate the inventions of their captives.

We will now conſider that which the ſame thing produces in different nations according to their principles and cuſtoms. The Romans, who were Soldiers and Orators, but not Philoſophers, ſcarce began to abandon their ruſticity and harſh manner before they fell into the relaxation of exceſsive luxury, and confuſed the idea of the beautiful with that of the rich, perſuading themſelves, as alſo now many actually do, that all that which pleaſes is beautiful; and on this maxim they made themſelves arbiters of judging of every thing without ſcience, and without a knowledge of the eſſence of things. The Romans had few artiſts, in proportion to the Grecians, and generally availed of theſe, but they did great injury to the arts by employing of ſlaves, and by the ignorance with which they judged of their works. Greece, in ſpight of its abaſement, revived to a ſmall atom

of liberty and felicity; and when finally the arts were forced to yield to the courſe and viciſſitudes of human things, they were not loſt or ruined intirely, until the invasion and oppreſſion of that barbarious and ferocious nation which even now domineer, and tyranniſe over them.

The tranſlation of the Roman Empire to Conſtantinople, contributed very much to the decay of the arts in Italy, and in Greece; the laſt finding itſelf ſtripped of its beſt works, and of its beſt Artiſts and deſpoiled of its beſt ornaments to adorn the new Rome; and in Italy becauſe they were left expoſed to the invaſions and conqueſts of Barbarians. Alſo concurred much to the ruin of the arts, the neceſsity in which were found at that time the heads of Chriſtianiſm, to extirpate Idolatry, and to deſtroy Idols, in which indiſtinctly were comprehended all the moſt beautiful ſtatues, condemning, and aboliſhing the Idols and thoſe who made them; and that with ſo much fury, that it is wonderful there are remaining ſo many beautiful works of venerable antiquity.

Then, when they formed anew the weſtern Empire, Idolatry was already extirpated, and Chriſtianiſm eſtabliſhed in its very vaſt provinces; from whence they thought of the arts, but with little ſucceſs, becauſe ignorance had occupied all the world, and this Empire being among nations barbarous and ferocious, ſeperated from the commerce of countries of a climate ſoft and benign, and of cuſtoms mild, where

in other times the arts and ſciences were flouriſhing, they did nothing excellent; and the ſculptors, eſpecially, dedicated themſelves to imitate men in thoſe ridiculous dreſſes which hide, but not adorn the figures. Such are all the monuments which are called Gothic, under which name are to be underſtood all the German and neighbouring nations.

In this unhappy ſtate the arts remained for many ages without ever improving, until they began to revive in Italy; and particularly in the Republic of Florence. The firſt ſtep was to collect medals and ſtones engraved by the ancients, and with that imitation they began to emerge from German barbarity. Ghiberto was the firſt who attempted to imitate the ſaid antiquity, but as he never ſaw the grand ſtatues of the Ancients, he remained famous only in trifles. To him ſucceeded Donatello; and ſoon after Michael Angelo Buonarroti profiting by the ſtatues gathered from dé Medici, opened his eyes, and he ſaw that the antiens had poſſeſſed a certain art in the imitation of truth, with which they made the imitation more intelligible and beautiful than the original itſelf. That great artiſt ſought the origin of beauty, and believed to have found it by means of Anatomy, upon which he fixed his greateſt ſtudy, and arrived to ſuch excellence that he immortalized himſelf by that new track, although he did not find in it that which he ſought, namely, beauty, becauſe it is not to be found in a ſole part, but in the whole, and in the union of ana-

tomy, proportion, and other circumſtances which compoſe beautiful things.

The other Sculptors of the Florentine ſchool imitated Michael Angelo in the appearance of the anatomical ſtyle, but without arriving to the knowledge of their maſter and; in that John Bologna, Mont Orſoli, and others became much inferior, even until ſculpture decayed with the fate of the Republic, and its Government paſsed to reeſtabliſh itſelf in Rome. Here Algardi began to introduce in ſculpture the ſtyle which the painters of his time already followed; that is, he pretended to uſe in his art the ſame imitation of painting, ſearching the effects of clare obſcure to augment certain parts by the ſight: In ſhort, he exceeded the limit of the end of ſculpture, which is, to imitate the form of truth, and not the appearance, which is the office of painting: in this manner he introduced an affected ſtyle.

To Algardi ſucceeded Lorenzo Bernini, who began where the other had finiſhed, and having dedicated himſelf entirely to puzzle the eye made certain ſtatues and groups with inventions the moſt bold and fanciful, and in a certain manner PLEASING, as we ſee by many of them at Rome, in which he always ſacrificed, correctneſs to brilliancy, and made all the forms altered.

The ſculptors who have come after, have ſhewn themſelves undecided in the imitation of Algardi, and Bernini; and if they have availed of truth, it has been to find the forms, and

to ſubject them to the manner of the aforeſaid maſters. The Fleming, who did children ſo charmingly, attempted to imitate antiquity in the figure of ſaint Suſan, and ſucceeded in imitating the appearance, but not the eſſential maxims.

Rusconi has been the laſt of ſculptors worthy of being cited. His works are more pleaſing than perfect, becauſe in place of good reaſoning of the art, his beauty conſiſts only in the obſervance of certain practical rules, which, in place of doing honour to the art, debaſe it.

By what I have until now explained of ſculpture, one might infer that it was exalted by means of Philoſophy, and that neglecting or forcing eſſential reaſons, it ſo decayed that it has no appearance of imitation of the works of the ancients; and laſtly, having abandoned its philoſophical ſpirit, (the true end and object of the arts,) it precipitated into the deſpicable ſtate in which it now is. Perhaps ſome will ſay that it has flouriſhed and ſtill flouriſhes in France, but you my dear friend have ſeen the works of thoſe profeſſors, and have eaſily diſcovered that it is not ſo. The ſame ſpirit which reigns among painters, perſecuted the ſculptors, that is, the abuſe of excellence by entering too much in it.

As I have been able to obſerve in hiſtories which treat of the arts that painting had been invented much later than ſculpture, I have my doubts if the nations who cultivated ſculpture before the Greeks had ever known painting. It

is not mentioned in the ſacred writings, or in ancient hiſtory, or even by the Egyptians, from whence I conclude, that all thoſe nations were ignorant of it before it was learnt by the Greeks; and ſince the origin of the arts conſiſted in the imitation of true things, I believe that for a long time they only made things carved, of colours reſembling nature, and perhaps that idea came from the colours which the ſame materials had, and particularly baked earth, which reſembles the colour of the ſkin. Pliny relates various hiſtories of the invention of painting, but he himſelf judges thoſe hiſtories not to be very exact. He ſuppoſes it nevertheleſs very ancient, and cites ſome works done in Italy by the Grecians, which in his time were ſtill preſerved freſh in Lanuvium, although they were done a little after the deſtruction of Troy. The time in which that author ſays Bularco flouriſhed, is very ancient, and he ſuppoſes before that lived thoſe who did the MONOCROMATI, that is, of one only colour. This paſſageof Pliny gives occaſion to make ſome reflections, by reaſon of the MONOCROMATI which have been found in Herculaneum, and are in the collection of Portici, which, with a mind ſo great, and with ſo much good taſte his Catholic Majeſty began, and if he had continued with the ſame ardour and love for the arts, he would have ſatisfied the expectations of all nations, and all wiſe people.

Theſe paintings, or to ſay better deſigns, done of only one colour, a dark red, upon a table

of white marble, have but an indifferent degree of excellence in reſpect to the profiles, but in all the reſt of the ſtyle they appear as works done in the infancy of the art, as well in the taſte which reigns in the cloathed parts, as in the extremities of the hands and feet. This opinion of mine upon the antiquity of theſe paintings, has not been approved by ſome learned perſons who have written in the Greek language, ſaying that the letters in which the names of the perſons repreſented are written, are of times very poſterior. To thoſe one might reply, that the author being an Athenian, that nation was able to ſurpaſs the other in the ſtyle of writing. But beſides that this explanation does not ſatisfy me, I find other difficulties in the colours with which the ſaid paintings are done, being, not of red earth, but of cinnabar which the ancients called MINIUM or carmine, and we are certain that this colour was not known until even after Apelles. In fine if theſe paintings are not an impoſition; that is, that alſo in that time they wiſhed to make them paſs more ancient than what they really were, it would be neceſſary to ſay that painting flouriſhed in Athens very late, or that the ignorant were not aſhamed to put their names to their works, or that they were of ſome rich Amateur who was not obliged to know better; or finally, that they ſerved for nothing but the erudition of the hiſtory of painting.

Returning to our reflections I ſay, that not finding any thing of certainty in authors near the commencement of painting, we ought to be-

lieve that it began by ſimple contours, filling the half with one colour only which moſt reſembled the object they wiſhed to repreſent. Some paintings of Herculaneum, made in imitation of Egyptian things, confirm my opinion. I do not ſay that theſe are of that time, but I believe them done in imitation of that taſte, to make them paſs for things truly Egyptian. In the ſame manner, or with little difference, has modern painting begun, as I ſhall preſently deſcribe, and thus the Chineſe began, and we ſee they have proceeded but little further.

It is likely that this ſtate of infancy in Grecian Painting (if ever it were ſo) remained but little time. Pliny, who compiled all the authors who wrote before him, although he does not treat of colours, except by caſualty, yet he gives an idea of what muſt have been the colouriſts anterior to the MONOCROMISTS; and ſince he ſpoke, as I ſuppoſe, principally of Grecians, one might prudently conjecture, that that nation ſoon abandoned this ſtyle, and that they began to uſe a little of clare obſcure and to make MONOCROMATI, and by little and little proceeded to join the variety of colours, and gradually, with the ſame philoſophical ſpirit which diſtinguiſhed them in Sculpture, they conducted painting even to the higheſt degree of perfection.

Polignotus, who flouriſhed towards the time of Phidia, was the firſt who perfectly expreſſed cuſtoms, and by that merited ſo much applauſe in this florid time of Greece. Parraſius was of a very fertile genius, and poſſeſſed all the parts of pain-

ting, as well as Zeuxis and others of that time. Protogenes was even more able and finished than them; and then came Apelles, who, having found the way open, and living in the age of Alexander the Great, in which time it appeared that nature made its utmost effort to produce and excite the greatest talents in order to sustain the glory and liberty of the country, added to the art of painting the last perfection; that is, Grace, which arises from the certainty which science gives painters to execute and produce facility in the same operation; and in thinking, and making themselves to be understood. Apelles was thus secure of possessing that prerogative, who in praising the qualities of other painters, said that he surpassed them only in Grace; and Protogenes retook it because he knew not how to detach his hands from his works. From this may be deduced that the art then arrived to its highest degree; but since the same could not advance further, or maintain itself in the same state, they began to augment their works in quality and size, dividing them in various classes, as for instance in low subjects, or buffooneries, and in a variety of extravagant things, such as CARICATURES, and other ridiculous species which painting suffered under the same misfortune of sculpture, until Roman luxury degraded it of that nobility with which it had been treated in Greece, by having all their Houses painted by miserable Grecians, or slaves, incapable of thinking, much more of imitating the works of the happy times of Greece, when the people of a city, or of a

province entire gave the reward for a painting. To the contrary, in Rome, every opulent citizen painted only the moſt deſpicable walls of his edifice, and thought it would debaſe noble habitations to paint them, which they dreſſed with marble and bronze, where the expence did more honour than the taſte. In the city of Herculaneum, Stabea, and Pompeia, happily diſcovered by his Catholic Majeſty, one ſees the moſt wretched houſes painted, and even the Taverns and Inns; and if one ſees ſome paintings in the Temples, Theatres, and public Edifices, yet the poverty of the country is known by the few marbles found there, in the mean time that in Rome they abounded with much profuſion.

Now we will conſider my friend, what has been the excellence of Grecian painters of the beſt time, and how much the works of theſe claſsical artiſts ought to be conſidered as ſurpriſing, whilſt we prize ſo much thoſe of Herculaneum. We know for certain that the ancients poſſeſſed deſign in the higheſt degree, becauſe we ſee in their ſtatues, and in thoſe paintings of Herculaneum, that although Deſign is not the part moſt remarkable, yet one finds in it traces of the higheſt taſte, and of a great facility of maintaining the juſt limits of the contours; that is, that they may not be overcharged, harſh, or dry. Above all, it is wonderful to ſee their great knowledge of clare obſcure, and of the nature of air, which, being a body of ſome denſity, communicates, and reflects the light to the parts which do not receive the rays direct.

As I have obſerved, how even in the worſt of theſe paintings that part has been underſtood, although executed with negligence it has ſtupified me to think, and to figure to myſelf, how they could have been the works of the moſt famous painters contemporary with the ſculptors of an Apollo of Belvedere, of a Gladiator, of a Venus of Medicis, and other ſimilar works, which are of artiſts of the firſt rank of antiquity.

Although the colouring of theſe paintings is not very excellent, we are not by that to doubt that the ancients poſſeſſed it in great perfection, when we know that they made a diſtinction between the two Ajaxs of different hands, ſaying that one was nouriſhed with roſes, and the other with fleſh. They knew perſpective, as one may find by the aforeſaid paintings of Herculaneum; and if we do not underſtand it, I know not what Parraſius would wiſh to ſay, when he inſiſted that no one could be a good painter without geometry. That which perhaps the ancients did not poſſeſs as well as the moderns is, machinery compoſition, becauſe their principal ſtudy was the perfection and quality of things, and not the quantity of them. One may believe that their ſtyle of compoſing paintings was little different from the ſtyle of baſ-relief according as one ſees in the ſame paintings of Herculaneum, in which the contraſts, the grace of the figures, the beautiful partitions, and the expreſsions are excellent. One knows even that they were done with quickneſs, and frank-

neſs, and painted with good freſco. In ſhort if one compares theſe paintings with all the works of the moderns, and if one conſiders that they were done in a place of ſuch little conſequence, one may know how much the paintings of the ancients were ſuperior to ours.

I have made this little digreſsion, to remove the doubt which many have entertained, that the ancients were better painters than the moderns, founding their ſentiments upon the mediocrity of the paintings of Herculaneum, and of others, which are conſerved at Rome, without reflecting upon the unhappy ſtate to which the Romans reduced painting. Painting had finally the ſame fate as ſculpture, and the profeſſors of both, falling into extreme ignorance and diſregard, and contributing alſo to the abolition of idolatry, one may ſay, that it was almoſt entirely forgotten, or at leaſt reduced to a miſerable ſtate, which we ſee by ſome holy images, and barbarous moſaics, which are preſerved in ſome ancient churches.

For many ages it remained in this miſerable ſtate; and the ſingularity is, that the ſame cauſe of its ruin, was the cauſe of its revival, that is, the worſhip of the chriſtian religion. The great commerce of Italy with Greece, and other parts of the world, introduced opulence; and the Italians wiſhing to build churches, and to adorn them with images, employed theſe miſerable painters, and Grecian artiſts of moſaics, to perform that little which they knew, and on this occaſion, ſome Venetians, Bolog-

nians, Tuſcans, and Romans, worked with the ſame ruſticity which we ſee in their maſters. Thus they proceeded diſperſing the office of painting until the Tuſcans raiſed it firſt from barbariſm by means of Giotto and his ſchool.

Theſe Tuſcans continued for ſome time in the ſtyle of the laſt Grecians in drapery, and in the partition of the figures, becauſe finding themſelves far from the Germans, and nearer Roman antiquity, and having alſo the opportunity of ſeeing the ancient medals, they ſtudied alſo theſe things. After that firſt ſchool, came others, which advanced a little more, as the Maſolini, and the Maſaccis, which in the air they gave to their dreſs, reſemble the taſte of Raphael, although he was anterior by almoſt an age. The unhappy ſtyle which they then introduced, retarded alſo the progreſs of the arts, which was, by placing contemporary perſons in the paintings of Ancient Hiſtory, with the dreſſes they then uſed in Florence; which injured very much their good taſte. Nevertheleſs, they continued to advance in the art, by copying truth, and by the ſtudy of perſpective; by which means, Ghirlandajo found the mode of a good diſpoſition, and of the exactneſs of deſign. Leonardo da Vinci applied himſelf to clare obſcure, and to the principal parts of painting. At the ſame time it advanced itſelf in the Venitian States, and in Lombardy, by means of Bellini, Mantegna, Bianchi, and others; but by the way which all thoſe followed, the diſciples ſucceeding in the maxims

of their maſters, it was impoſsible that the arts could advance with ardour, or exceed the perfection of Leonardo da Vinci, and Peter Perugino, the firſt having already principals of grandeur, and the ſecond a certain grace and eaſy ſimplicity.

In that ſtate of things, it received a ray of the ſame light which illuminated it in ancient Greece, when Michael Angelo, who with his great talent, had already furpaſſed Ghirlandajo, ſaw the works of ancient Greece in the collection of the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici. He attempted to imitate them in ſculpture; and animated by emulation towards Leonard by the works which between both they had made in the hall of the old Palace at Florence, he gave a new aſpect to painting.

Conſider my friend, how many were the opportunities to revive their talents, when the government gave them a noble ambition, and employed them in great works. What ſublime genius's are unknown, from not being diſcovered in time! But in that age, in which the greater felicity of the Florentine Republic was confined the loſs of its liberty, and the great temporal Roman power, with the princes of its decay, all the powers of Europe found themſelves in fermentation, and the ideas even of the loweſt perſons were great. In that time therefore, it happened that the greateſt talents were employed in moſt extenſive works, which ſerved much to improve the arts. Michael Angelo was choſen to make a ſtatue in marble,

of twenty two palms and an half, the moſt of a Coloſſos that any of the moderns ever undertook.

Pope Julius the ſecond, determined to erect a magnificent Mauſoleum, for which he called Michael Angelo to Rome, and in the mean time that he was conſidering where to place it, he made him paint the ceiling of the Chapel of Sixtus the fourth. This great work was a vaſt field, and proportioned to the talents of that artiſt, who, at the age of thirty years only, knew how to encreaſe the fire of his genius inſtead of diſsipating it.

Effectively in that Chapel, painted at different times, although conſecutively, one ſees that he improved his ſtyle, and without an occaſion like this he would never have arrived to that degree which he did; becauſe he there diſcovered greatneſs in the whole, exactneſs in the contours, knowledge in the form, great relief, and ſufficient variety; of which they had not then a juſt idea.

In the time of the ſame Pontificate Raphael was called to Rome to paint the Vatican Hall. This ſublime genius began the undertaking of theſe ſpacious walls, and before he finiſhed the firſt painting he enlarged his ſtyle,

He began the ſecond, which was that of Philoſophy, called the School of Athens, with the ideas and maxims which he had terminated the firſt, and he carried painting ſubſtantially to the higheſt degree in which it has been ſeen ſince the time of the Greeks. All thoſe parts which

could be added to the arts after Michael Angelo one finds united in this work. The compoſition, invention, expreſsion, drapery, the variety of the characters, the knowledge, and ſubtilty of the art, one ſees here executed with wonderful facility.

Raphael continued to paint the other Hall, and when he diſcovered the firſt part of the ceiling of Michael Angelo, then it was that he moſt pleaſed. They ſay that Raphael firſt ſtudied in Florence the cartons of that painting; but although that be true, it was not a proper ſtyle applicable to the indifferent paintings which he then finiſhed in the chambers of the Vatican. Michael Angelo was able to please Raphael when he compleated the work of the Sixtina, and diſcovered ſome greater facility and ſweetneſs; and of that great ſtyle, ſo pure and regulated, he compoſed a third ſtyle, with which he then finiſhed his paintings.

The firſt fruit of this new ſtyle of Raphael was the Prophet Iſaiah, which is in a pilaſtre of the Church of Saint Aguſtin at Rome: it has all the greatneſs of the prophets of the Chapel Sixtina, but with the difference, that in this is hid all the artifice of the aforeſaid greatneſs, and in in thoſe is diſcovered too much the intention of the author. They relate that a diſpute having aroſe about the price between Raphael and him who ordered that prophet, Raphael left it to the deciſive judgment of Buonarroti, who ſaid that the ſole naked knee was worth more than the ſum in diſpute; from whence one deduces

the generous probity of both. Condivi relates another expreſsion of Raphael, which proves ſtill more his magnaninimous character, becauſe he aſſures that that profeſſor returned thanks to God for having been born in the time of Michael Angelo. With ſuch greatneſs of mind, perſons of true merit know how to be emulous!

Raphael painted in the aforeſaid ſtyle the Sibyls of peace, which in their kind could not be very excellent, and with the ſame tenor he proceeded in his other works.

His laſt, which is the transfiguration, contains ſuch delicacy in the art, as well in theory as in practice, and in the execution of the parts painted by his hand, that it gives pain to conſider that we have loſt at thirty ſeven years of age a genius ſo ſublime, born with the ſame ſpirit of the ancient Greeks, and if he had flouriſhed in that time, and with the ſame opportunities he would have diſcovered the ſame qualities, becauſe among the moderns he has been the only one who has poſſeſſed the moſt eſſential requiſites of the art, ſuch as expreſsion, variety, invention, compoſition, deſign, colouring, and drapery. In fine in order to equal the ancients, he wanted nothing but the ſtyle of beauty, which certainly, neither in the ſchools or cuſtoms of his time could he then learn.

At the ſame time Giorgione who was a little anterior to Titian, founded a ſchool of painting at Venice, which ſchool made great progreſs from the opportunities they had of painting great

Façades and Saloons. As Titan by living at Venice had not the opportunity of examining ancient works, he could not fundimentally acquire a great ſtyle like Michael Angelo, and for that reaſon he placed not in the knowledge of the forms all that attention which they merited, and applied himſelf more to the appearance of truth, which depended upon the colours of the body, and arrived in that part by continual exerciſe of painting and copying nature, to ſuch excellence that he has never been equalled; and to this contributed much the magnificence of the Venetian Gentlemen, who wiſhed to be painted by him, or to have from his hand paintings of naked women.

Contemporary with Titian, the Duke of Mantova employed Montegna, and in Modena he eſtabliſhed the firſt academy that has been in Italy, from which came Bianchi, maſter to Anthony Allegri named Correggio. He was called to Parma to paint the Church of Saint John of the Benedictine monks, and with this work, which for that time was very great, he formed a proportionate ſtyle, and gave ſo much taſte to the Parmazans that they commiſsioned him to paint the Cupola of the Cathedral.

That great genius profited of the merit of other painters anterior and contemporary. He took the firſt rudiments from Bianchi, and then ſtudied under Mantegna, who was a learned man, and a paſsionate admirer of the ancients, and obliged him to ſtudy their works. Correggio exerciſed alſo the PLASTICA, working in

company with Begarelli and by the exercife of fculpture which facilitaed much the knowledge of bodies, and by the ftudy of antiquity he furpaffed the limits of the miferable and confined ftyle of his Maſters, and was the firſt who dedicated himſelf to relieve the ſight by a certain ſoftneſs and grace of which he was the inventor, and in which he has never after been equaled.

The principal merit of his works conſiſted in relief, and in the knowledge of clare obſcure, as well in the imitation of truth in the bodies, as in the invention of the maſs.

In this manner painting arrived at that time to a higher degree of perfection than ever the moderns had carried it; having acquired by Michael Angelo fierceneſs of contours, the forms of the moſt robuſt bodies, and the higheſt grandeur; by Raphael, Invention, Compoſition, Variety of Characters, Expreſsion of the ſtate of the Mind, and of dreſsing well the bodies; by Titian the knowledge of the colours of bodies with all the accidents which the modifications of light can produce in them; and finally by Correggio delicacy and the degradations of Clare Obſcure, amorous painting, and the exquiſiteneſs of Grace and Taſte.

Painting being in ſuch a ſtate, it was very natural that it ſhould advance under the direction of ſuch great maſters, or that it ſhould degenerate into capricious novelty; which effectively it did. The Tuſcans wiſhing to follow Michael Angelo, imitated only ſomething of the form of

his fierce contours; but without the knowledge and underſtanding of their maſter; and thus they pretended to imitate Salviate, Bronzino Vaſari, and others.

In the ſame manner the Diſciples of Raphael took only ſome part of him, but none of them took the eſſential. Giulio Romano wiſhing to imitate ferioufneſs and expreſſiveneſs, made the phiſiognomy horrible and affected. Polidoro in wiſhing to be eaſy, gave into licentioufneſs. Pierino inclined always to the Tuſcan ſtyle. Penni was cold and inanimate. Pellegrino Manari was of ſhort life; and thus finiſhed that illuſtrious ſchool.

Correggio left not any Diſciple worthy of him, becauſe Parmigianino who immediately followed him, made a mixture of the ſtyle of the Diſciples of Raphael, and of the grace of Correggio, which he overcharged.

Although Titian had not Diſciples who imitated him in every thing, the Venitians were nevertheleſs more fortunate, becauſe painting continued and was ſupported by means of Paolo Veroneſe, who imitated no one, and formed his ſtyle by following nature, whilſt all the other imitators and followers of the ſaid maſters, endeavoured to imitate ſome of their parts, but forgetting the firſt end of the art, which is to imitate truth.

It is conſtant and proved by experience, that every age has its particular character, which by means of a general ferment, enlivens the imaginations of men. Be it by caſualty or by other

cauſes, which are uſeleſs here to examine, it is certain that in the fourteenth and fifteenth age aroſe throughought the world geniuses great in arms, and in the arts.

In Germany, France, Flanders, and in Holland, the arts appeared alſo; but the climate did not permit them to make the progreſs, generally ſpeaking, as in Italy, and their ideas remained inſignificant. Nevertheleſs, as theſe were induſtrious and diligent people, they ſhowed in ſome parts more or leſs of their Genius.

In Flanders, and in Holland, where there was moſt commerce, and conſequently moſt riches, they began to produce ſome painters who remained alſo eſtimable in the line of pure imitation of truth. In thoſe countries, where there was a little more inſtruction by reaſon of its communication with Italy, as well as in the free cities of Auguſta and Norimberg, flouriſhed alſo painting, and particularly alſo carving, which muſt have given much opportunity to engrave arms and to make moulds for printing, then invented with ſo much utility to literature and commerce; and many books being publiſhed at that time with cuts engraved in plates, and on wood, that gave motive to many to apply themſelves to painting, to be able to invent and deſign theſe things. Albert Durer found the art of engraving much advanced in regard to mechaniſm, and he added more corrections in deſign and invention; and, with the ſtudy of perſpective, he found alſo the manner of placing the figures and groups in different ſtages, and of giving profundity to

his inventions, as Ghirlandajo had done at Florence. Many wiſhed to imitate Durer, who, had he been born in Italy would have acquired taſte; but neither him, or his imitators, could riſe from barbariſm; not ſeeing any other figures than thoſe of their country, or other dreſſes than the extravagant ones of their time. To all other nations it happened the ſame, and they remained deprived of a good taſte, until they had communication with Italy, and there learnt the arts.

The war, which at the end of that florid age, happened throughout Europe, was a great misfortune for them, and particularly for Italy. The Italian Princes occupied themſelves almoſt entirely in military occupations, and cooled in their love for the arts. The ruin by the war deſolated many provinces and cities. Rome ſuffered infinitely from the famous ſack which the Spaniards and Germans gave it under Bourbon. Florence loſt its liberty, and all Italy was in violent convulſion. Venice only remained exempt from that univerſal pillage; and the great Titian outlived the greateſt turbulence; but money generally failing, or to ſay better, increaſing to all the Italian Princes the neceſsity of ſupplying the exorbitant expences of the war, they failed in rewarding the arts, and the artiſts dedicated themſelves to diligent labour, and with a ſtyle affected and overcharged, ſo that the arts languiſhed for a long time.

By good fortune, were born at Bologna, ſome great geniuſes, which were the Caraccis. They contented themſelves with ſmall recompences, as the ſons of poor fathers, and applied themſelves with the greateſt attention to ſurpaſs the Procaccinis, who were here much envied on account of being foreigners. Lewis, the eldeſt, had ſtudied the works of Correggio, and ſuperficially imitated his ſtyle in the grandeur of the forms and the maſs. He was maſter to his couſins, Hannibal and Aguſtin, who had much talent, and ſtudied a good ſtyle, but were addicted to work in haſte; and by that the firſt works of Hannibal are of good taſte, but overcharged and little ſtudied. He improved by ſtudying Correggio, but ſince his talent was more of a mechanic than an artiſt, he imitated his model only in a part of the appearance, and not in the fundaments of the ſtyle; and by that he could never acquire grace, delicacy, or ſoftneſs. He cauſed, notwithſtanding, great benefit to the art in learning taſte by a new way more eaſy, becauſe all his predeceſſors who ſought eaſe, gave into extravagance, and exceeded the bounds of reaſon.

When Hannibal was at Venice, he in part imitated Paolo Veroneſe. He came however to Rome, and ſaw the works of Raphael, and the ancient ſtatues, which ſoon made him a painter of another ſtyle. He moderated his fire; reformed the caricature of his forms, and ſought beauty in the ancient character; but ſtill conſerved a part of the ſtyle of Correggio to maintain his grandeur. In

ſhort, he became a painter, who after the three luminaries of modern painting merited the firſt place.

Lewis came to aſsiſt Hannibal in the work of the Pharnetian Gallery; but ſeeing that it was more difficult to content Rome than Bologna, he returned to his country, where he undertook the painting of the cloyſter of Saint Michael in Bosco, and there employed a ſtyle more ſtudied and of better taſte, and diſcovered his eſteem for Raphael, by placing in one of his hiſtories the Sapho of Parnaſſus of the Vatican.

To theſe Carraccis we owe the reſtoration of painting; and from their ſchool came the celebrated Guido, a painter of much merit, eaſy, and elegant, and who would have been another Raphael if he had had better precepts.

Dominichino, who attached himſelf more to the ancient form, one knows to have ſtudied particularly the Laocoon, and the Gladiator. Lanfranco, of fertile genius, applied himſelf to the ſtudy of the diſtributions of the maſſes, and of the motions of the works of Correggio, and eſpecially of the Cupola of the Cathedral at Parma, taking the ſole appearance, and not the ſubtile reaſons of the art; and Albano, who ſtudied the forms of the ancients, was a graceful painter. In ſhort, none of the diſciples of the Carraccis were of bad taſte.

Guercino da Cento was original in his ſtyle. He had great knowledge in clare obſcure; and

if he had given more nobility to things, he would have been as eſtimable as Guido Reni.

The ſame ſpirit which the Caraccis left in Italy, ſoon produced painters of merit in other nations. In Spain, that profeſsion began to flouriſh in the time of Charles the Vth. and of Philip the IInd. by reaſons aforeſaid, and on account of the great work undertaken by this laſt King. It was unfortunate for Spain, that at that time, painting was adulterated by caricature and affected figures; and as the major part of painters who were there, were of the Florentine ſchool, in which deſign was always prevalent, and a certain melancholy ſeverity of ſtyle, this remained, until the Spaniards ſaw the works of Rubens, which pleaſed many ſo much, that they dedicated themſelves with ardour to imitate them, and they made thus, a rare mixture of their own, and of that ſtyle.

James Velaſquez was averſe to making himſelf a follower of any one, and with his noble talent formed a character of his own, founding it in the imitation of truth, and in the moſt exact obſervations of the reaſons and effects of clare obſcure, taking a ſtyle of painting with reſolution, and as one might ſay, with deſpight, indicating the things which he had ſeen in truth without deciding them, or copying them. In ſpight of theſe principles, as Velaſquez, and much leſs the other painters of the Spaniſh ſchool, had not had the exact ideas of the merits of the Grecian works either in beauty or the ideal, they proceeded imitating one the

other, and the greateſt talents imitated truth, but without choice, and were pure naturaliſts.

Of the Flemings, as I have ſaid, ſome had ſeen Italy, and became middling painters; but the major part, moved by utility more than glory, applied themſelves to ſmall pieces of country ſcenes, flowers, animals, and ſimilar things. Rubens had finally a ſuperior talent, and having ſtudied the great Titian at Venice, attempted to imitate him, by taking a way more eaſy; and, wiſhing to ſecure himſelf of pleaſure in appearance, he overcharged as much as his model had of beauty, and with ſo much force, that he had not the firſt ſimple ideas and attention to truth, like Titian; and by that he exceeded the limits of the contours, and had little regard to truth. He had, notwithſtanding, the ſame merit of the Caraccis in Italy; that is, he was the father of the Flemiſh ſchool, which before him, had no proper character.

Anthony Vandyke, who painted in the ſame time, was more the friend of truth; eſpecially in portraits, in which he merited the firſt rank after Titian; and in the acceſſary parts he was ſtill more elegant. All the other Flemiſh profeſſors merited eſteem, according as they more or leſs approached theſe two maſters.

In France, they began to know the ancients, by means of the works which Francis the Iſt. imported from Italy, to adorn, with ſtatues and paintings, Fontainbleau; where he employed

Roſſo, Primaticcio, and Nicola dell' Abate; but with all that, the arts made but little progreſs there, by reaſon of civil wars, until the time of Louis XIII. and XIV.; and although Rubens painted the gallery of the Luxembourg, the few ancient works which there were in France, preſerved that nation from the contagion of that ſtyle.

The culture of the Belles Lettres, and the tranſlation which they publiſhed of the Grecian authors, infuſed in that nation, the deſire of imitating the ancients, and all the artiſts wiſhed and endeavoured to viſit Rome; and in that manner, although for a long time they had not to boaſt of any eminent painter, yet they did not introduce at leaſt any vicious ſtyle. Finally, among the many who came to Rome, Nicholas Pouſsin was him who propoſed to imitate entirely the ſtyle of the ancients, and if the cuſtoms of his age had not impeded him, he would have obtained his end. Painting always in oil ſmall pieces, took from him the opportunity of enlarging his ſtyle, or of executing works of ſo much ſtudy as thoſe of the firſt men of Italy. Conſidering, however, his works only as ſketches, they are excellent.

Immediately after Pouſsin, ought to be placed Charles le Brun; who alſo ſtudied in Italy. He was of a lively genius, and an eſtimable inventor, and had opportunities of ſhewing it in the great works ordered by Louis the XIVth. In the ſame mode, were alſo the good painters, Mignard, le Sueur, Bourdon, and others; until

France quitted the good road, and ſerious ſtudy, to be accounted by ſome artiſts of talents, which they call HOMMES D'ESPRIT, like Jovenet, and Coypel, who went out of the limits of the good and the beautiful, by loading the one and the other placing too much in the whole, and aſpiring to pleaſe the eye more than the reaſon.

It is not ſurpriſing that this happened in France, when even in Italy they abandoned the good taſte of the ſchool of the Caraccis. Who could have imagined in the time of Michael Angelo that there could have come from the Tuſcan ſchool a John of Saint John, a painter of ſo much merit, but ſo far from the ſolid ſtyle? And eſpecially a Peter of Cortona, to fruſtrate all the ideas of the art in Italy; deſpiſing ſerious ſtudy, which even to his time had been the fundament of painting, reducing the whole to only ſuch compoſitions, as could ſeduce the ſight. At the ſame time one ſees in Rome, Andrew Sacchi, a painter of the ſame taſte, and of the ſame eaſe of Cortona, teaching to leave paintings only to indicate, and taking the ideas of natural things, without giving them any determination.

The ſchools of Florence and Rome, changed their road. Thoſe of Bologna and Lombardy extinguiſhed inſenſibly; becauſe to Albano ſucceeded Cignani, and Ventura Lamberti, and to thoſe Franceſchino, Joſeph del Sole, and the capricious Creſpi, who one may call the laſt. In Venice, after the great men, Giorgione, Titian, Paolo, and Tintoretto,

painting decayed at once, becauſe the ſucceſſors regarded only eaſe, without ſearching the fundaments und excellence of theſe; and that which is generally called taſte, has remained as the ſole object of that ſchool.

Rome was a little more happy; becauſe to Andrew Sacchi, ſucceeded Carlo Maratta, his diſciple, who applied himſelf much to deſign the works of Raphael in the Vatican, and took even from his youth the love of ſerious and exact ſtudy, but the general taſte of his time, did not permit him to follow entirely the character of Raphael, and the opportunity of always painting Madonnas, and Altar-pieces, carried him to a mixed ſtyle of thoſe of the Caraccis and Guido, and thus he ſuſtained the painting of Rome, and prevented its decay as in other countries.

In the mean time that this happened in Rome, Lucas Giordano formed a new ſchool at Naples. He took his firſt principles from Ribera; he went to Rome to ſtudy rapidly the Carracis and their ſchool, and finiſhed by chooſing the ſtyle of Cortona. With this Capital he returned to Naples, and was ſo applauded there, that he founded, as I have ſaid, a ſchool, from whence came Solimena in company with others, and as in that time they were deficient in Rome of painters of merit, one of the diſciples of Solimena, called Sebaſtian Conca, brought there that ſtyle of painting, and thoſe maxims, more eaſy than good, by which he finiſhed the ruin of painting.

In that manner is the noble art loſt to our time, becauſe they knew how to ſpread, as one may ſay, fragments of the idea of ſome profeſſors, that more good ariſes from a mere and material practice, than from rules and principles founded upon reaſon.

Artiſts are generally flatterers of the eyes of amateurs, and thoſe have deſtroyed their judgment and ſenſes by the vices of the laſt ſchools.

Before finiſhing, I would wiſh to ſay ſomething of architecture, as ſiſter of the other two noble arts. I have conſidered it in two different aſpects; as it ariſes from two different principles; one being neceſsity, and the other the delight of the imagination. With regard to the firſt, it ought not to be ranked among the Belle Arts, but among the mechanics, becauſe to place a man under cover from all the inclemency of the weather, or building with ſolidity, has nothing to do with beauty; and in fact we ſee in that part the works of the Egyptians, Arabs, and Goths, have not ceded to the Greeks and Latins. But who will ever eſteem them as beautiful as theſe? Speaking however of the origin of that art, it is likely that it was invented and improved by different countries, according to their climates and materials, and to the wants of the people.

The nature of warm climates, and ſcarceneſs of trees, muſt have led men to repair to grottos and mountains; and in cold climates, to woods, where muſt have ariſen the idea of con-

ſtructing in the laſt countries, cabans; and in the firſt, grottos.

The population of the world increaſing, it is very natural that thoſe nations who lived a paſtoral life, ſhould have thought of conſtructing tents, which are another kind of buildings.

Until this time, neceſsity regulated the delights of men; but ſince they could not for a long time accommodate themſelves to the ſame train of things, they ſoon advanced from that ſtate, and naturally deſiring in all things ſome object which could agreeably occupy the ſenſes and underſtanding, they poſſeſſed in the whole ſome ornament; that is, a certain ſomething, without which, a thing would be that which it ought to be, and give one occaſion to think and fix the attention; as we ſee that even the barbarous nations put in all their furniture, ſpots, colours, and figures, although without taſte and ſymmetry: one ſees, however, that it is inſeparable with human reaſon, to wiſh to make things after ſome idea.

If we examine the principles of hiſtory and of architecture, we ſhall find that it originated in the Eaſt, after the idea of mountains and hills, men heaping up ſtones and earth to cover themſelves, and attempting at the ſame time a competition with nature. The vaſt walls built in the firſt times, are no more than hills, which incloſe a portion of people, and form thoſe immenſe cities which hiſtory mentions; and the tower of Babel was a true mountain.

The pyramids and other ruins, which are ſtill to be ſeen in Egypt, preſent the ſame idea. The Egyptians invented, long before the Greeks, the uſe of human figures, and animals, to ſuſtain their edifices; animating as one may ſay, thoſe ſtones that ought to ſupport part of the fabric. The form of their colomns has no elegance, and perhaps they did not uſe them, until they were known to the Greeks. In the other edifices of Aſia, and of the moſt remote anquity, one cannot diſcover even the leaſt elegance, and one may ſay, they did not poſſeſs the art of architecture, but only the art of building.

The Greeks of Aſia Minor, were the firſt who gave form to the art, by introducing beauty in their buildings. Vitruvius and others refer to that origin; and in fact, one ſees, that the idea of tents and cabans, is preſerved even in the moſt magnificent edifices; but ſince architecture has no origin or prototype in nature, it could not preſently find proportions more beautiful, and remained expoſed to the caprices and ideas of men, of times, and of circumſtances.

The firſt Greeks, who thought ſtrength was the moſt uſeful quality of man, imagined the character of robuſtneſs. Then civil police encreaſing, and cuſtoms being ſoftened, they began to eſteem the beautiful, and gave more elegance to their edifices; but as nature had endowed them with a philoſophical genius, they kept themſelves within the limits of moderation,

nor dedicated themſelves to ſuperfluous ornaments, and luxuries, but contented themſelves with the limits of reaſon, and in this medium conſiſts the beauty of Architecture. The foundation of that art began by neceſsity, and from the uſe of building; its beauty is in the character correſpondent to the end propoſed in the forms and ornaments; and its limit is reaſon. The Greeks in their beautiful times obſerved all that.

The Romans, (a nation more rich and luxuriant than the Greeks,) loaded their architecture with ornaments, and introduced more orders, and more diviſions; and finally loſt that beautiful ſimplicity and ſolidity, breaking off the principal members with capricious contours. When finally they loſt the eſteem of the Belle Arts in the Roman Empire, by being occupied by continual wars; and when the invaſion of the Moors deſtroyed even the principles of good taſte, came the time which we know under that of Gothic Architecture; not becauſe that tribe of barbarians tranſported into Italy any natural ſtyle of architecture, but that they uſed their own buildings, wiſhing to imitate without rule the ancient edifices which they had themſelves deſtroyed; and framing the ideas which diſcovered to them their natural ignorance, and in order quickly to finiſh their buildings, they neglected the ſtudy of good taſte, and of beautiful proportions.

Alſo the tranſlation of the Imperial reſidence from Rome to Conſtantinople, and the diviſion of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Empire, contributed

much to the ruin of the art. The countries ignorant and remote, ſuch as France and Germany, not knowing even the principles of Grecian architecture, it was not poſsible that they could introduce a good taſte, and by that they not had only ſome idea of the art of building. Perhaps by means of religion, and ſome fugitive Grecian monks, they communicated to the aforeſaid nations ſome idea of the edifices of Conſtantinople; and with that they conſtructed ſome temples, employing only the pure rules of the mechaniſm of building. Finally they augmented that method, and making all merit conſiſt in difficulty and boldneſs, and not in elegance, appeared in thoſe nations, ſuch extravagant and ſtrange things, totally contrary to good taſte and reaſon; and caſually they eſtabliſhed that taſte of Architecture which by abuſe they called Gothic, and which is truly German.

The new Empire being eſtabliſhed in Germany, the ſplendour of the court was the cauſe which propagated its faſhions in other nations, and in that manner the aforeſaid ſtyle of architecture extended itſelf throughout Europe, and remained until Italy had diſsipated every barbariſm that was introduced there. The Venitians, I believe, were the firſt who in honour to St. Mark, built a magnificent temple, availing of a Grecian architect, who, notwithſtanding he preſerved the barbarous ſtyle of the age, was not ſo extravagant in the proportions, as thoſe who are called purely Gothics. Arches and cupolas partake alſo of grandeur in their curves, although very far from true beauty.

Finally the Florentines, by means of Orcagna, began to abandon that deformed ſtyle, and Brunelleſchi was the firſt who reduced the minds of the Italians to the taſte of Grecian Architecture. Bramante and San-Gallo approached it a little more, and from their examples many others dedicated themſelves to ſtudy a good ſtyle. Alſo Michael Angelo applied himſelf to that Grecian ſtyle; but finding it perhaps too ſteril for his fiery and fertile genius, he began and ended with the moſt ardent and intrepid ideas. The grandeur of the building of ſaid Peter gave opportunities to thoſe fervent talents to baniſh and place in entire forgetfulneſs, the ideas of the German ſtyle.

San-Micheli, San-Sovino, Palladio, and Scamozzi adorned the ſtate of Venice, and all theſe united together to diffuſe by their buildings, good taſte throughout Italy; as alſo by their books which they publiſhed, eſpecially Palladio, Scamozzi, Serlio, and Vignola.

If architecture had been able to maintain itſelf in that ſtate which thoſe great maſters had eſtabliſhed, it would not have been ſo little fortunate; but the love of novelty and the ambition of the artiſts, in wiſhing to be all inventors, made them ſoon give into a thouſand extravagancies and diſproportions; and in place of reaſoning upon the ideas of the firſt men who had raiſed the arts from barbarity, they loaded members upon members, interrupting the moſt eſſential, fooliſhly inventing minute and rediculous contours, and loſing ſight of the good cha-

racter, and majeſtic proportions; ſo that they remained attached to rules, and paſſed for ſtubborn and ſtupid men.

Thus proceeded architecture even to Bernine, who, in ſpight of his licence, had a gay ſtyle. Peter of Cortona was very capricious, and Borromini extravagant, even to the moſt furious folly. From that time architecture has no longer had reins, and one believes all that lawful which one finds examples of in the aforeſaid profeſsors, from which have ariſen a variety of incredible inventions, ſome ingenious, but no work truly beautiful.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

THE

WORKS

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS.

VOL III.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WORKS OF ANTHONY ALLEGRI,

CALLED

CORREGGIO.

MEMOIRS

CONCERNING

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ANTHONY ALLEGRI,

DENOMINATED

CORREGGIO.

VERY confuſed are the accounts which we have of the life of Correggio. Some ſay that he was born in the year 1490, and others, with more foundation, ſay that he was born four years after that date, at Correggio, or a village near it. His real name was Anthony Allegri, but he latinized it in ſigning and putting in his paintings Læti; but nevertheleſs he always was, and is known by the name of his country, Correggio. Nothing is known of his family: we know only that he was twice married, and that he had children by both wives. From the firſt was born at Correggio, Pompey, or, as others call him, Pomponio; and in Parma a daughter in 1524, and another in 1526. In the year following he had the third daughter by the ſecond wife.

There are doubts alſo of the time of his death; but it appears certain that he died the 5th March 1534, at the age of 40 years. Some ſay that he was very poor, and of low extraction; others make him rich and of noble family, and that he left a good inheritance to his ſon Pompey; but in neither the one or the other accounts have ever appeared any documents. I believe equally falſe the two extremes, and that he was rich in proportion to the country in which he lived, and the little money in circulation at that time, as one might infer from the kind of money with which we know that they paid him for his works. The authors who have written his life, have compared him with the painters who lived in great courts and rich cities, ſuch as Rome, Venice, and Florence; and have had reaſon to lament the fate of Correggio, conſidering his great merit. That however does not prove that he was not poſſeſſed of ſomething ſufficient to live in philoſophical felicity, contenting himſelf with a ſimple life, equal with that of his fellow-citizens; aſpiring to be better but not richer than them. That which is certain, is, that in his paintings one does not ſee any ſign of that economy, or avarice, which is obſervable in poor painters, or thoſe who wiſh for riches; becauſe his works are painted on good wood, on fine canvas, or on copper, and often re-touched with accuracy and ſtudy. The colours which he uſed are of the moſt choſen and difficult to practice. He employed with profuſion in the drapery, fleſh, and fields, the ultramarine, and ſtrongly impaſted the whole; a thing

which one does not ſee in any other painter. His lacca was the moſt fine, and for that reaſon we ſee it preſerved even to our time; and his green colours are ſo beautiful as not to be ſurpaſſed.

Laſtly, it is of little importance whether Correggio was poor or rich. That which evidently reſults from his works is, that his education ought to have been very good; and what P. Orlandi relates is very likely to be true, which is, that Correggio ſtudied philoſophy, mathematics, painting, architecture, ſculpture, and every ſort of erudition; and of courſe converſed with the moſt famous profeſſors of his time. In fact, in his principal works one diſcovers a very learned and poetical ſtyle of thinking; as for example, in his painting of the Education of Love, where he repreſents Venus with wings and with a bow, to ſignify that the Mother of Love, who moves the heart of men and gods, is of a celeſtial origin; and the ſame graceful allegories are to be found in all his other compoſitions, as we ſhall ſee in the deſcriptions of his paintings.

At that time flouriſhed in Modena, according to the account of Vedriani, an academy of Painting and Sculpture, which had produced ſome good artiſts; among which were Franciſco Bianchi, ſurnamed *il Frari*, and Pellegrino Munari, known by the name of *Pellegrino of Modena.*

Correggio began to learn painting of the aforeſaid Bianchi, and from thence paſſed to ſtudy under Andrew Mantegna. It is probable alſo that he ſtudied architecture, as one ſees by his works,

and here he acquired a beautiful and grand taſte; and, according to the laudable cuſtoms of that time, he applied himſelf alſo to ſculpture, but I know not if he arrived to work in marble. It is however certain that he worked in *plaſtica* and ſtucco, becauſe they ſtill preſerve in Modena, in the church of Saint Margaret, a Depoſition of Anthony Begarelli, ſculptor of Modena, and great friend of Correggio, who did with his own hand three of the figures. It is not known for certain whether Begarelli learned ſculpture from Correggio, or Correggio from Begarelli, or if they ſtudied together; but it is however certain that this is the beſt work of Begarelli, who made many others alone even to the year 1555. The aforeſaid Vedriani writes that Begarelli aſſiſted Correggio, making him the models for the celebrated work of the cupola of Parma; from whence one concludes that he ſerved him, and that the painter was not ſo poor as is generally pretended, becauſe he employed and paid a ſculptor, who in that time had the firſt reputation in Lombardy, and of whom Michael Angelo made much account. I do not pretend, by that, that Correggio was very rich: every one will think as he likes; however, I know not in our time any painter who is in a ſituation to pay a good ſculptor for making him neceſſary models of ſo vaſt a work as that of Parma.

The works are very rare to which Correggio put his name, and the date in which he did them; from whence it is very difficult to fix the epoch when he began to offer his works to the public,

or the ſtyle of his firſt labours. Among his paintings, which from Modena have paſſed to Dreſden, one only is with his ſignature, but without date; and here one diſtinguiſhes the ſtyle of his maſters, as I ſhall preſently relate. Nor is there any conſiderable work by which one can deviſe by what way he abandoned the dry manner of his maſters, and acquired that great and noble ſtyle which he always followed afterwards.

Since no one has recorded how Correggio made his ſtudies, or by what means he advanced ſo much in his profeſſion, it will be permitted me to make ſome conjecture upon the ſame.

We know that Pellegrino Munari, on hearing the fame which Raphael had acquired, propoſed to go and ſtudy under him; and, abandoning his country, went to Rome. When Pellegrino took this reſolution, Correggio then ſtudied at Modena, and probably heard the ſame praiſes of Raphael and of Michael Angelo. Shall we ſay then that he was leſs ſtudious, and leſs a lover of the art and of glory, than Pellegrino? He certainly cannot ſay it who has obſerved the works of an artiſt, who even from his beginning was ſuperior to his maſters; and who imagined a mutation ſo rapid as from his firſt to his ſecond ſtyle, and who, not content with being equal to many great men, and ſuperior to all in his country, abandoned notwithſtanding that ſtyle, and undertook, by means of new ſtudies and the moſt profound meditation, to change almoſt the art of painting. By that I incline to believe that Correggio went to Rome, where he ſaw and ſtudied the works of

Raphael, and much more thoſe of Buonaroti; but being of a mild and modeſt character, and only occupied in the ſtudy of his art, he fled the amuſements of company, and the acquaintance of other painters, and by that did not ſubject himſelf to the ſtyle of any one, nor was an imitator of any one, but took beauty wherever he found it.

Some people will tell me, it is not known that ever Correggio went to Rome; but I will reply, that not knowing it does not prove that he never was there; becauſe frequently we ſee that what many people have done, is not known until they have acquired a certain reputation; and generally are known in Rome only thoſe Profeſſors who work there, and not foreigners who go there for the ſole end of ſtudy, and it is probable that Correggio was of this number; and this probability will acquire more force by other reaſons which I ſhall preſently adduce.

It appears to me incredible, that Correggio was not eſteemed in his own country, and thoſe around it, as ſome would give to underſtand; whilſt the moſt important works of his time were committed to him. The firſt cupola ever painted was that of Saint John at Parma, and the painter was Correggio, who completed it in 1522; the ſecond was that of the cathedral of the ſame city, and painted by the ſame in 1530. Theſe great works, which were committed to him, ſhew that he was reputed as the firſt painter; and that if he had not gained great honour by the firſt, he would not have been employed in the ſecond; and they would have ſought other

painters, which were not then wanting in Venice and in Lombardy itſelf. To this might be added that which Ruta ſays, that when the aforeſaid cupola was finiſhed, Correggio was paid the remainder of its price, which was 170 ſcudi of gold in copper money; and that, having carried this ſum upon his ſhoulders, it heated him and brought on a malady of which he died at the age of forty years and ſeven months, and was buried in the cloyſters of Saint Francis. According to that information, the price which they gave him for painting the cupola muſt have been much more than the ſaid ſum which remained; becauſe in a work ſo great as that, it was regular and almoſt neceſſary to have ſupplied him with different ſums in the courſe of his work. Being thus, Correggio could not have been ſo ill paid, if one conſiders the age, the country, and the value then of money; and if we compare it to the prices which were paid to Raphael (who was the beſt paid of any painter of his age) for the rooms of the Vatican, which was 1200 ſcudi of gold for each.

To that might be added what Vaſari ſays, which is, "that Duke Frederick of Mantua, wiſhing to give two paintings to Charles V. at the time of his coronation, which happened at Bologna in 1530, thought of Correggio to execute them." He ought therefore to have been a profeſſor much eſteemed, when a well-informed prince preferred him to Giulio Romano, whom he held in his ſervice, and knew that the Emperor had Titian at his diſpoſal;

from which it might be argued, that wiſhing to make his gift more valuable, he choſe Correggio to meet better the taſte of that monarch.

I conclude from all this, that although the memoirs of the life of Correggio are ſo confuſed and uncertain, one may nevertheleſs be aſſured that he had the beſt education, and that he learnt as much as ſuited his profeſſion; and that his paintings are productions of a ſublime, delicate, and cultivated genius; becauſe every one who knows the art, and is even but ſuperficially informed, muſt be convinced that without the aforeſaid quality, it was impoſſible for Correggio to produce ſuch famous works. If he were not rich, he certainly was very generous to paint with ſo little economy as he did; and finally it appears evident to me, that he arrived to acquire great honour and reputation. But in fine it is of little conſequence whether he was noble or a plebeian, rich or poor, when we know that he was a great painter, and that his works invite one to follow him, and inſtruct us. To this effect I have gathered all the information I have been able of his paintings, which I am going to deſcribe; and although perhaps there are others which I am not acquainted with, yet theſe will be ſufficient to give an idea of his wonderful talent, which in ſo ſhort a life could produce ſo many works with ſo much ſtudy, aſſiduity and delicacy, and ſo finiſhed that only to conſider them with due accuracy it appears impoſſible to have performed them in ſo ſhort a life.

There were ſome paintings in France of the

moſt beautiful ſtyle of Correggio; and among others thoſe two which the Duke of Mantua preſented to Charles V. and which the Duke of Orleans bought of the hereditary Duke of Bracciano. One repreſents Læda, and the other Danae. The Emperor ſent theſe paintings to Prague, and had them placed in the royal palace, where they remained till the famous thirty years war, when, that city being ſacked by the Swedes, Guſtavus Adolphus ſent them to Stockholm. That king being dead, they remained unknown in the minority of Queen Chriſtina, until an ambaſſador, who knew the hiſtory, ſought after theſe paintings, and by theſe means they were traced out and found ſerving as ſhutters for the windows of a ſtable. They were repaired the beſt poſſible, and that Queen eſteemed them as they merited: ſhe carried them herſelf to Rome as precious things, and obtained previous licenſe of the Pope to take them out of the popedom whenever ſhe wiſhed. After her death they paſſed to the hands of Don Livio Odeſcalchi, among many other valuable things of that Queen, and that gentleman held them in much eſteem as long as he lived; but his heirs ſelling many of his rarities, the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, bought them and the ſtatue of Philip V. King of Spain, from whom they fell into the hands of the father of the preſent Duke, who from rigorous principles cauſed them to be deſtroyed in his preſence in order not to be deceived; and he burnt the head of Iö, another painting of Correggio, which appeared to him the moſt expreſſive. The remain-

ing pieces of that painting were collected by Charles Coypel, firſt painter to the King of France; and when he died, another French painter made it a new head; and in this ſtate a financier bought the painting, and from whom the King of Pruſſia purchaſed it at a high price. It is ſaid that the Læda had the ſame fate of the Iö; and if the Danaë is ſtill preſerved, it is, however, ſo hidden that I know not of any one who has been fortunate enough ever to have ſeen it.

The painting of Læda is more an allegory than a fable. The principal figure repreſents a woman with a ſwan in her lap, which appears as if it would wiſh to approach its bill to her lips. She is ſitting by the ſide of the water, in which ſhe has one foot. Since the fable ſuppoſes that Jove is transformed into a ſwan to enjoy Læda, this painting is called always by the name of Læda. But at the ſide of this figure one ſees an infant girl, who, with an innocent air, endeavours to defend herſelf from another ſwan, which attacks her as he is ſwimming in the water, in which is the young girl up to the ancles. Further on there is a young woman, who, in the act of being dreſſed by a ſervant, views with attention another ſwan, which flies, and appears as if departed from the place where ſhe is; and ſhe, in viewing it, ſhows ſigns of joy and ſatisfaction. Further on is the half-figure of a woman rather advanced in years, dreſſed, and in expreſſions of grief. At the other part of the principal figure is a Cupid, who, with much

grace, touches a lyre of ancient make; and there are alſo two of the Loves, who with various horns have made an inſtrument which they are ſounding. All this is repreſented with a grace of which Correggio alone was capable. The field is a grove of branched trees of various kinds; and the fore-ground is occupied by a lake of pure water, which appears a cryſtal, and extends to that part of the painting where are the aforeſaid women. All is very beautiful, and appears a painted poem, which has for object all the various accidents of love*.

The other painting of Danaë clearly repreſents that fable, but with a ſpirit truly poetical. One ſees Danaë gracefully lying down in bed: a beautiful Cupid, or be it Hymen, ſuſtains with one hand the hem of the ſheet which covers her lap, where ſhe receives the ſhower of gold in which Jove is transformed, and with the other hand ſhows her the beauties of thoſe drops, which ſhe looks at with complacency and very expreſſive pleaſure. At the feet of the bed are two Loves, who, playing, prove upon a touch-ſtone the one a drop of gold, and the other the point of an arrow; and the laſt appears of a character much more robuſt than the other, certainly to denote that love ariſes from the wound of the arrow; and that its ruin is gold. This painting is all grace, and the Hymen has the moſt beautiful countenance that can be imagined, and all

* Beſides many other copies of this painting, there is a print engraved with good taſte by Du-Change.

the figure is deſigned with ſuch elegance that no modern painter has ever exceeded it. The clare obſcure ſurpriſes, and, notwithſtanding the body is in part a little illuminated, it is ſtill ſo clear and ſo reflective, that one knows not that it is in the ſhade, which is however ſtrong, but it gives greater relief to the thighs, which receive the light, eſpecially the left thigh which has the appearance as if detached from the painting. The head of Danaë is made in imitation of the Venus of Medicis, and has the ſame kind of hair. Correggio added only the neceſſary expreſſion to his ſubject, and a character a little more youthful*.

The painting of Iö is of equal beauty, and the back of the figure is there repreſented, to avoid the act too ſcandalous which would have ariſen by making it in front; and ſince Jove is there repreſented as transformed in a cloud, any other form would have deſtroyed all the grace of the figure, ſo that it is impoſſible to imagine better a ſimilar ſubject. I ſay nothing of the expreſſion, which, if it has any defect, it is that of being too perfect and ſignificant, becauſe, as well in the head as in the ſhoulders, in the hand or in the feet, which are the parts one ſees, it is impoſſible to expreſs that laſcivious act with more heat.

After Correggio had fulfilled the part of the painter, he added that of the poet; figuring in the field a ſtag, which, in the act of drinking,

* Du-Change has alſo engraved this painting.

diſcovers all the anxiety of ſatisfying the thirſt and ardour of love.

There is a ſecond of this painting in the gallery of Vienna, accompanied by another of equal ſize, in which Correggio repreſented the rape of Ganymede; a work full of grace, with a beautiful field in the ground, which expreſſes the objects as if one ſaw them from the height of a mountain: here one ſees the dog of Ganymede, which truly appears in the act and anxiety of wiſhing to fly to follow his maſter.

Among the things of Don Livio Odeſcalchi, was a young Cupid ſeen by the back, who makes an arch of a piece of wood leaning upon two books; and further on are two infants of half-figure, who are wreſtling; the one laughs, and the other weeps, to repreſent fortunate and unhappy love.

All theſe paintings were in the gallery of the Duke of Orleans, and came from the ſame Odeſcalchi; and there was alſo another, which being in every reſpect reſembling one I am going preſently to deſcribe, I ſhall now omit to ſpeak of it, ſaying only, that it repreſented Venus with Mercury, who is teaching Cupid to read.

The King of France poſſeſſed another painting, repreſenting the marriage of Saint Catharine, of little more than natural half-figure, with Saint Sebaſtian, and with the martyrdom of both theſe Saints figured at a diſtance. This painting has been always much admired, as one might know by ſo many copies which are done of it, and ſome by the moſt famous painters. This,

with two others, of which I have to ſpeak, were preſented by the Cardinal Anthony Barberini to Cardinal Mazarine, and has the peculiarity of being painted in diſtemper on canvaſs, with figures of four palms in height. Both are ſymbolical or poetical ſubjects, the one repreſenting Virtue, and the other Vice. In the firſt is figured Virtue ſitting, and armed; and by her ſide is another figure, which repreſents conjunctively the four Cardinal Virtues, with their ſymbols, the bridle, ſword, ſkins of lions, and little ſerpents entwined in the hair. At the oppoſite part is another figure, which with a compaſs in one hand meaſures a globe, and with the other directed to heaven repreſents the Sciences; that is, the knowledge of things celeſtial and terreſtrial. There are ſome figures flying above, one of which is Victory, who meets Virtue; and the other is Fame, who makes them known. All the heads are wonderfully graceful, and not leſs ſo are the motions of the figures. Of this ſame painting is found a ſecond, not finiſhed, in the gallery of Prince Doria at Rome. The companion of this repreſents a vicious man tormented by his paſſions, careſſed by pleaſure, enchained by habit, and ſtung by remorſe of conſcience*.

There was in Rome another octagon painting, where Correggio repeated the two figures of Science and Virtue, of the laſt painting which I have deſcribed, and in the middle a ſhield of

* Theſe two paintings were engraved by Picard the Roman, and give ſufficient idea of the original.

arms with ſome ſtars; but then he made upon it a kind of field; though here one knows that which had been painted under. This painting was ſold to a merchant at Berlin, to which place it was conveyed.

I have heard that in the aforeſaid gallery of the Duke of Orleans, there is another little painting aſſuredly of Correggio; which had ſerved for the ſign of an Inn, and in which is painted a Muleteer with his Mules.

The firſt work which this great man painted at Parma, was the Cupola of the Church of Saint John, of the Benedictine Fathers, and the four pedeſtals, as alſo the tribune upon the great altar. The cupola has no ſky-light, or any window at the ſides. In the middle is Chriſt in his glory, ſuſpended in air, with the twelve Apoſtles under, ſeated upon the clouds. Theſe are naked, and in a ſtyle of greatneſs which ſurpaſſes every imagination; and nevertheleſs the forms are beautiful, and ſerved as models to the Carracci's, and particularly to Lewis, in whoſe works one knows that he propoſed to imitate it. Whoever examines this painting with attention, will be induced to believe that Correggio had ſeen the works of Michael Angelo.

In the lunettes he repreſented the four Evangeliſts, with the four Doctors of the Church; and in that work it appears, that he had wiſhed to follow a ſtyle ſimilar to that of Raphael, which one ſees in the ſimplicity of the dreſſes, and in the poſtures and actions; becauſe the ſame imitates

the Socrates of the School of Athens, and an auditor of the Predication of Saint Paul in the Areopagus, who are in one of the tapeſtries of Raphael. Whoever would wiſh to be convinced of it, and cannot ſee the painting, may find it by the print engraved by Giovannini. A Saint John painted in freſco, by Correggio, upon the door of the veſtry of the ſame church, appears much more of the ſtyle of Raphael; above all in the character of the head; which, if it were found upon a piece of wall, without knowing who did it, one would take it for a work of Raphael, rather than Correggio.

The Tribune painted by Correggio was demoliſhed by the Monks to enlarge the Choir; but Hannibal Caracci being then at Parma, theſe Monks made him copy the whole with the ſame meaſure; and the Tribune being re-built, they got them copied again by Ceſar Aretuſi. The copies of the Caracci's were bought by the Pharneſian houſe, and are now in the Muſeum of Capo-di-monte at Naples. The principal group which repreſents the Madonna crowned by Jeſus Chriſt, was cut off from that building, and is preſerved in the library of the Duke of Parma.

Other ſeparate pieces paſſed through the hands of different individuals, and there are three of them at Rome, in the houſe of the Marquis Rondanini; which aſtoniſh every one who views them near, and conſiders with what excellence and facility they are executed. This work, according to Ruta, was finiſhed in the year one thouſand five hundred and twenty-two.

In the ſame church are two admirable paintings of Correggio, which are at the two ſides of the Fifth Chapel, at the right-hand. That at the left, which is towards the altar, repreſents the martyrdom of Saint Placido, and of Saint Flavia, with other Saints. Although the whole of the painting is moſt beautiful, yet that which claims particular attention is the head of the Saint, who, in the mean time that the executioner pierces her breaſt with a pike, looks ſo lovelily to heaven, that ſhe appears to care little of the martyrdom. In the oppoſite painting is Jeſus Chriſt dead, with the ſenſeleſs Mother ſupported by Saint John: here one ſees that ſhe ſuffers all the pangs of death; and the Magdaden in tears at the feet of our Lord, has the moſt beautiful expreſſion that ever can be ſeen. Theſe two paintings are on thick canvaſs, and are of a moſt beautiful colouring, much impaſted, of great force, and appear done after the cupola, from whence they are of a more delicate ſtyle, although not ſo finiſhed as the other works of Correggio exiſting in Parma.

Nevertheleſs Hannibal Caracci made a great account of the laſt of theſe two paintings; becauſe of all that he did of this ſubject he always took the ſame invention; and it appears that generally he applied himſelf more to the ſtyle of that work, than to the moſt ſublime that Correggio uſed in others. It is evident that he did it becauſe this was more eaſy to imitate; but it is a little feeble, and dark.

In the church of the Fathers Rocchettini, in the firſt chapel, entering on the left hand, is the painting of the altar, done on wood by Correggio in the moſt beautiful and finiſhed ſtyle. It repreſents the flight into Egypt; and as the Virgin has a baſon in her hand, it is known in the painting for the Madonna of the Baſon. Correggio uſed to employ poetical ideas as well in ſacred ſubjects, as in the profane, from whence he made a figure, but not of an angel, who pours water from a vaſe into the cup, or be it baſon, which the Madonna holds in her hand. It appears that in this manner he wiſhed to perſonify the fountain, after the manner which the ancients figured the fountains and floods; but, however, for this he did not repreſent a nymph, or any profane things. In the laſt ſtage of the painting, and in the place moſt remote, is an angel, in the act of tying an aſs, with ſuch expreſſion and grace, that perhaps it is too much for ſuch an action*.

In the church of the Annunciation of the ſame city, on entering it at the left ſide, one ſees painted in freſco, the Myſtery of the Incarnation; but it is very ill treated; by reaſon, that finding it painted in another place where it became demoliſhed, it was removed to where it now is: in ſimilar caſes it always happens, that with the new humidity, and with the ſalts of the

* This wonderful painting was ruined thirteen years ago, by a young Spaniſh painter, who, obtaining permiſſion to copy it, gave it ſo barbarous a waſh, that he ſcarcely left any colour upon the wood.

cement, is formed upon a painting in freſco a kind of tartar which ſpreads over it, and makes it appear diſcoloured.

In the church of *Madonna della Scala* is a painting of Correggio in freſco, of the Madonna and the child in her arms, of half figure, but very much ſmoked, and almoſt ruined.

The celebrated painting of Correggio, which is now admired in the Academy of Parma, was in the church of Saint Anthony of the Fire. The eulogy which Hannibal Caracci gives it, and which one may read in a letter printed among the *Pittoriche*, and publiſhed by Monſignor Bottari, ought to be ſufficient, being of a painter ſo intelligent; but he who has ſeen that painting, will feel ſuch impreſſion from it, as not to be able to ſpeak of it but with particular affection. This painting, therefore, like many others, was done for the devotion of one, who wiſhed to have various Saints together without forming a hiſtory, or particular ſubject. One ought not, however, to accuſe Painters and Amateurs, of Anachroniſm, from ſeeing paintings which repreſent kinds of ſpiritual viſions, with which mixedly are united various Saints, for whom, him who orders the work has particular devotion. From whence in this painting, is repreſented with the higheſt excellence, the Bleſſed Virgin and Child; by the ſide, Saint Jerom with a book, as if he would preſent to Jeſus his writings; and between this Saint and the Child, is an Angel, in the act of pointing out in the ſaid book ſome paſſage of ſcripture, and ſpeaks with Saint

Jerom in a ſmiling air. The figure of this Doctor is naked, except a kind of violet ſaſh, and a piece of red cloth, which covers him a little; but the ſhoulders are left uncovered, and the right arm and leg: all this is moſt beautiful, and deſigned with perfect anatomical knowledge, and of wonderful colouring. At the part oppoſite is the Magdalen, who with the right-hand takes the left-foot of the child, in the act of kiſſing it, and, turning the face as wiſhing to careſs it, has ſuch grace as Correggio alone was capable of imagining. Beyond the Magdalen, is an angel ſmelling a vaſe, to ſignify the offer of an unguent of the Magdalen to Chriſt. Among the beautiful paintings of Correggio, this is almoſt the moſt beautiful, and one can only compare to it the little Magdalen, and the famous Night, of which I ſhall treat in their places. With regard to the ſtyle in which this painting is executed, it is to be known that it is ſo well impaſted, and has a richneſs of colour which is not to be ſeen in any other, and at the ſame time it is done with ſuch clearneſs as is very difficult to preſerve in uſing ſo much colour; but the moſt difficulty in this kind of painting, thus impaſted, is the variety of the tints, and in ſeeing that the colours appear as if not laid on by the pencil, but as if they had been infuſed together after the manner of wax upon a fire. Although the whole of this painting is wonderful, yet the head of the Magdalen exceeds in beauty all the reſt, and one might ſay that he who has not ſeen it, does not know to what the art of painting can

arrive; becauſe in that is found the expreſſion, and the preciſion of Raphael; the tints of Titian; the impaſting of Giorgione; that truth and characteriſtic exactneſs which one ſees in the little variety of the forms, and of the tints of the portraits of Vandyke; the grandeur of Guido, and the gayneſs of Paolo Veroneſe: all however is preſented to the ſight with ſuch tenderneſs and delicacy as the great Correggio alone could poſſeſs; as no other has ever been able to imitate him, or even to copy him; becauſe the copies which the moſt able painters have made of this painting are, when compared to the original, like fire in compariſon to the ſun.

The cupola of the Cathedral of Parma, in which Correggio repreſented the Aſſumption of our Lady, is the moſt beautiful of all the cupolas that have been painted before or after him; but now it is ſo ſmoked, and ſpoiled, that one can ſcarcely retrace its excellence. Its figure is octagonal, and the angles are diminiſhed according as they ariſe. It is ſhut up without a lantern, and in its place is painted with violent foreſhortening, Jeſus Chriſt who comes to meet his mother. Below are many Saints, in wonderful foreſhortening; from whence comes the principal group of the Aſſumption of the Virgin Mary carried by many angels, ſome ſuſtaining the robes, and others ſounding various inſtruments. All that takes but the half of the ſuperior of the cupola. In the inferior there are windows almoſt circular; and for that reaſon, Correggio feigned there a kind of ſock, which is repreſented as at a

diſtance, and leaves room for the Apoſtles between the windows, ſome ſingle, and others two together; and notwithſtanding ſome fall upon the ſame line of the angles, they are ſtill ſo well diſpoſed, and foreſhortened, that they never offend the ſight, and appear planted vertically upon the cornice. Upon the ſaid ſock are diſpoſed two youths in the ſtyle of angels, but without wings, lighting torches, and others are with cenſers and vaſes; from whence theſe unite the inferior compoſitions with the ſuperior, becauſe they are of a leſſer proportion than the Apoſtles and the Madonna; the whole together form an admirable variety of grandeur and lightneſs. In the four angles, or lunettes, he figured four great niches, which contribute much to the good effect; becauſe, ſuppoſing that the light comes from the aperture above, and that they leave the ſuperior part of the ſaid niches obſcure, it illuminates to the contrary the figures, forming a contraſt with the ſhade of the field.

In theſe four angles, Correggio painted four holy patrons of the city: Saint Thomas, Saint Ilarius, Saint Bernard, and Saint John the Baptiſt, ſeated upon clouds, and accompanied by angels, who ſupport and play with their attributes. In all this work, and particularly in the lunettes, is all the grace imaginable, and the greateſt knowledge of clare obſcure; and if one conſiders that the whole is painted in freſco, the wonder will more increaſe. We know that Correggio made in relief all the models of the figures which he painted in that cupola, in which aſſiſted his

friend Begarelli; the only means by which he could have executed that work with the perfection he did; and which was his laſt; and characteriſed more that profeſſor than he had ever been before.

Modena once poſſeſſed treaſures of Correggio, but they were ſent to Dreſden when the late Duke of Modena ſold all the beſt paintings of his gallery to Auguſtus the third King of Poland, who bought one hundred paintings at the price of one hundred and thirty thouſand zecchini, which were coined on purpoſe at Venice.

Among theſe paintings ſix were of Correggio. Five are the moſt beautiful he ever did; and the ſixth, which is the inferior one, is alſo very precious, becauſe it ſhews in what ſtate painting was when that profeſſor came to the world. It is a large piece, with figures of natural ſize, which repreſent the Madonna with the Child ſeated upon a kind of throne, in the middle of a body of architecture of the Ionic order, of a character ſufficiently grand, and he feigned an arch behind the Virgin, with a few heads of infants, and two intire, repreſenting Angels, but without wings. At one part are Saint John the Baptiſt, and Saint Catherine, and at the other Saint Francis, and Saint Anthony of Padua. This work is well preſerved, and is of much force; and although it has a little of harſhneſs in the contours, it is notwithſtanding ſmooth, and well painted in the interior parts of the figures. The colouring is true, and rich; of a ſtyle between that of Peruginus, and Leonardo da Vinci; and in particular

the head of the Virgin approaches much the ſtyle and character of the laſt, eſpecially in the cheeks and in the ſmiling countenance. The folds appear ſomething as if done by Mantegna; that is in the mode of encircling the member; but they are leſs dry and more grand. The compoſition is done with all the good reaſonings of variety and contraſt. In ſhort, if Correggio had more maintained that ſtyle, it would have been ſufficient for him to have equalled in merit either Ghirlandajo, Bellino, Mantegna, or Perugino; but he obſcured it all with the new taſte with which he perfected the art.

It appears that Correggio abandoned not his firſt dry ſtyle by degrees, but that in an inſtant he advanced to perfection. I do not know for certain from whence that aroſe, but I will give my conjectures upon the ſame.

In the ſame collection is a portrait of half figure, painted on wood, of a man who holds in his hand a book. Whilſt he was at Modena this portrait was known for the Phyſician of Correggio. The colouring and impaſting are beautiful enough; but I incline to believe, that it was painted at the ſame time of the Cupola of Saint John, when the Author had not yet finiſhed all the ſtudy which he did afterwards in the minor forms, and in the variety of tints. To give an idea of the ſtyle of that painting, I would compare it to that of Giorgione; but more pallid, and of inferior colouring, although equally impaſted, and a little more clear.

The third painting, which is in Saxony, is

known by the name of Saint George, and ſhows the great application of Correggio, and his ſtudy always to advance in the art. This work, according to the account of Vaſari, was made for the Brethren of Saint Peter the Martyr, at Modena, and had a body of architecture painted on the wall around it, as is ſeen by the original deſign in the poſſeſſion of Monſieur Mariette at Paris. This is a work of extraordinary finiſh, of great ſoftneſs, excellently well impaſted, and in the whole is very pleaſing. The compoſition, however, is a little interrupted; the figures have moſt beautiful movements; and the deſign is of a moſt grand character; the drapery is much ſtudied, and all is executed with great attention. One knows that Correggio took here all his parts from Nature, and formed them in ſmall models, from whence he copied the little parts, which he choſe for the clare obſcure, as one ſees more particularly in the Children who play with the helmet of Saint George; becauſe the Saints, forming their ſhade, have all thoſe accidents of light, which could only be obſerved by the models, it not being poſſible that children could ſit all the time that was neceſſary for ſuch obſervations; from whence I am confirmed in the opinion, that before Correggio executed this work he applied himſelf to modelling. In this painting is the Virgin ſeated on a kind of throne, or pedeſtal, ſuſtained by two golden Children; and at the ſides are the four Saints, George, John the Baptiſt, Jeminian, and Peter the Martyr. This laſt is in the act of interceding for the devout. St.

Jeminian preſents the Child a Model of a Church, ſupported by a Child of divine beauty. The Child Jeſus ſhows pleaſed at the preſent, by extending his arms to receive it. The grace and ſweetneſs with which this Child is conceived, deſigned, and painted, cannot be expreſſed. More in the foreground of the painting, is the young Saint John the Baptiſt, of ſeventeen or eighteen years old, which I ſuppoſe was done by Correggio to give more grace to the compoſition, by contraſting the characters of the figures. That of Saint John is deſigned with wonderful knowledge of nudity. The anatomy is well ſtudied, and expreſſed with the ſingular grace of Correggio. He has the head turned to the people, pointing with the right-hand to Jeſus Chriſt; and it appears that he ſays, *Ecce Agnus Dei.* A little forwarder, and half turning his ſhoulders, is Saint George, of the moſt beautiful and grand ſtyle that one can imagine in an heroical character. In the foreground is a Child, who holds in his hand the Sword of the Saint, and one does not ſee the points of his toes, ſuppoſing them hid by the Table of the Altar.

The other Painting which ſucceeds to that, bears the name of Saint Sebaſtian; and although the aforeſaid of Saint George is ſo aſtoniſhing, many intelligent perſons find in the compoſition of this ſomething preferable, which approaches more the modern ſtyle. Certainly, few works of Correggio (except the famous Night) have ſo much effect as that. It is probable that it was done for ſome religious offering of the city of Mo-

dena, in the time of the plague; but we know not from what Church it was taken, by ſome one of the Dukes, to put it into his gallery. We know only that it was there much before that of Saint George. It repreſents the Madonna in glory among the Clouds, with the Child in her arms brightened by the beams of the Sun, and various Angels. On the ground are Saint Jeminian, Saint Roque, and Saint Sebaſtian. The effect of that painting is admirable, and ſhows to what degree Correggio poſſeſſed the art of clare obſcure, and the diſtribution of colours. The firſt thing which ſurpriſes one in viewing it, is the light of the Glory, which effectively appears a Sun; and above all it is only of one colour, which is a rather clear yellow, and the border of the Painting is more dark. It appears that the Madonna and Child come forth from the body of light, as if it were an obſcure ground. The Madonna is dreſſed in roſe colour, very vivid, as if covered with lacre, with a mantle of dark blue. The fleſh of the Mother and Child have but little degree of light, which adds infinitely to the good effect, becauſe it maintains the group in its true diſtance. The two Angels at the ſide are oppoſed to the clear field with leſs force, and are ſitting upon rather dark clouds, which augments more their grace, and that of the other various Angels which are among them. One of the aforeſaid Angels of the Throne appears to be ſpeaking with Saint Roque, and the other with Saint Sebaſtian, indicating to them that it was neceſſary to have re-

courſe to Jeſus, who gives ſigns with his hand to accept the ſupplication.

Under that celeſtial group is a little hillock, whoſe colour unites with that of the clouds, which leaves but a ſmall aperture by which one diſcovers a little of the country. At the left hand over Saint Roque, the obſcurity of the clouds and the mountain make a field to the figures below, which is in the firſt place Saint Jeminian, who in a golden pluvial lined with a very beautiful green, and in a white alb, forms the principal point of the light; but ſince that and the other lights are ſmall, they advance the objects without prejudice to the maſs of clare of the glorious group.

On the other ſide one ſees Saint Sebaſtian on foot, tied to a tree, in the act of interceding for the infected: he is naked even to the girdle, and the tints wonderfully attach the inferior parts to the ſuperior of the compoſition. At the ſide of Saint Jeminian, is Saint Roque leaning the right arm and head upon the mountain, as if abandoned and infected by the plague. At the part which is above that Saint the clouds make a ſhade, but all with reflective light, as correſponds to each ſhade in the open field. This accident, wonderfully aids the repoſe of the ſight, and the variety: contraſting with Saint Sebaſtian, who is illuminated in the breaſt and ſhoulders, whilſt Saint Roque is illuminated only in the thighs, and in that manner it is relieved from a diſagreeable uniformity. At the feet of Saint Jeminian is a girl of twelve or thirteen years of age, who holds

in her hand a little edifice with a tower, like a little church, repreſenting, as ſome think, the city of Modena, of which that Saint is the patron. This figure has all the grace of Correggio. It is remarkable that all the Angels of this painting are without wings *. In this ſame gallery is the celebrated painting of the Penitent Magdalen; in height little more than a palm; and in length leſs than a palm and an half. This ſole image contains all the beauty which can be imagined in painting, for the diligence with which it is executed, the impaſting of the colours, the ſoftneſs, grace, and knowledge in the clare obſcure. Correggio figured the whole obſcure, and ſhaded, except the naked part of the Saint. The head is of half tint, but illuminated by the reflection which comes from the arm, and a book which he is reading. The field, although obſcure, is equally beautiful, and feigns a ſpacious place, ſuch as the bottom of a grotto, and of a valley, with trees and verdure. In ſhort, if the other paintings of Correggio are excellent, this is wonderfully ſo. The hair of the Saint, beſides the ſoftneſs with which it is done, by appearing as if the colours were melted to make it, gives ſo perfect an idea of what it is, as if the hairs were painted one by one, and have even the luſtre of natural hair. In the ſale, this painting was valued at twenty-ſeven thouſand Roman ſcudi.

* This painting had ſuffered ſome damage, which was augmented in carrying it from Modena to Dreſden; but, with the great care that they had to preſerve the fragments, it was excellently repaired by Signor Sedriz, painter to King Auguſtus.

The ſixth and laſt painting, which the King of Poland bought, is the moſt celebrated of all, known to the world by the name of *la Notte di Correggio*, and repreſents the Birth of our Lord. This work was done by Correggio for Alberto Pratonieri, as appears by the agreement which he made in 1522, when he finiſhed the Cupola of Saint John at Parma; but this painting was not finiſhed until the year 1527. Perhaps this delay ſerved him to ſtudy more the effect of clare obſcure, wiſhing to make the light come ſolely from the child; a thing which, until then, only Raphael had imagined; nor ſhould I be ſurpriſed if, with this ſtudy, and by modelling all his compoſitions, Correggio then found his beautiful clare obſcure, and that wonderful foreſhortening which he diſplayed in the celebrated Cupola in the Cathedral, which was his laſt and moſt glorious work.

This painting, the *Night*, is in the aforeſaid gallery of Dreſden, and very well preſerved; and is one of thoſe paintings which moves the heart of him who views it, whether he be intelligent or ignorant in the art, but much more that of the firſt. The imitation of Truth is executed with ſuch artifice, that it loſes every idea of itſelf, art is there ſo well hid, that it appears done with the greateſt facility. The compoſition is ſimple, but hides the moſt ſingular art, by ſhowing in a very ſmall ſpace, a field ſufficiently great, with a diſtance that appears truly as if one ſaw a melancholy and miſerable place, but ornamented with a horizon where one ſees the dawn of the day, which enlivens all the reſt. At a diſtance are

ſome ſhepherds, which one ſcarcely diſtinguiſhes, and among them and the Madonna is Saint Joſeph, in the act of leading the Aſs, whoſe figure enlarges the place, ſhowing the diſtance that there is between that and the Virgin, and of the other parts, even to the ſhepherds. It appears at firſt ſight, that the ſituation of the Virgin might have been better ſtudied, becauſe the head is inclined towards the child, in a manner that one cannot ſee all the face; but conſidering it better, one knows that it was not poſſible to make one part better, without taking much from the grace. Correggio inclined that head, in order that the light which comes from below, ſhould not produce a ſhade in the parts above, which would have injured the beauty of the face. The child is alſo placed with particular care, becauſe it is taken obliquely, in a manner that one can ſcarcely ſee the face, although one ſees the hands and the feet; and theſe I believe were made by Correggio, purpoſely to avoid expreſſing the natural form of children juſt born, which is not very pleaſing, becauſe we are not uſed to ſee it; and this ought to ſerve as an example, to avoid that which is not beautiful in Nature, rather than to alter the Truth; making beautiful that which is not ſo in itſelf. Perhaps for the ſame reaſon he almoſt hid the face of an old ſhepherd, who is in the firſt ſtage, placing him before another who is more youthful and beautiful, and who with a motion full of joy, appears to ſpeak of this ſucceſs to the old man. A Shepherdeſs who has two turtles in a little baſket, ſhows that one never tires

to ſee the young Jeſus, and that ſhe did not know how to depart; and covered her face with her hand to hide herſelf from his ſplendor. In the upper part of the painting, oppoſite to the Madonna, is a Glory with Angels illuminated equal to the child; where Correggio placed the ſecond light, but not ſo perfect as that of the Madonna, and made the ſhade more ſoft, as if it were reflected, or compriſed in a kind of maſs of light, perhaps to make known that they are ſpirits. The beauty, grace, and delicacy of that painting are admirable, and executed in different ſtyles, according as it agrees to each of them.

In the collection of the paintings of Count Bruhl, who was prime miniſter to the aforeſaid Auguſtus III. King of Poland, is a little painting of ſomething more than one palm in height and a little leſs in width, which repreſents the nuptials of Saint Catherine. It is painted on canvaſs upon board, and on the back there is an inſcription in ancient character, *Laus Deo. Per Donna Metilde d'Eſte. Antonio Lieto da Correggio fece il preſente quadro per ſua devozione anno* 1517. If this inſcription be genuine, this muſt have been one of the firſt works of his ſecond ſtyle. It is certain that it is a moſt beautiful painting.

Among the paintings which were of the Duke of Parma, and which are now at *Capo di Monte* at Naples, one is entirely ſimilar to the aforeſaid, nor can one doubt but both are of Correggio; becauſe among the infinite copies which different great painters have taken of it, and among others

Hannibal Caracci, there is no one which approaches the original. This ought to have been much eſteemed even from the time it was finiſhed, becauſe it was engraved by Hugh da Carpi, who was almoſt contemporary with Correggio.

Returning to the Gallery of Saxony, there is alſo a painting of the Bleſſed Virgin, of half figure, with the child ſleeping in her arms, which was engraved by the celebrated Edelink, who believed it to be of Correggio; but we know for certain that it is of Sebaſtian Ricci the Venetian, who with a view of impoſture made it paſs for a work of Correggio, by imitating his manner, and by giving it a certain caſt of antiquity. But by examining it attentively, even the print diſcovers the impoſture; becauſe in place of grace there is only affectation, and in the clare obſcure only falſification.

There is likewiſe another painting in the ſaid gallery which is aſſerted to be of Correggio, by him who engraved it at Rome. It repreſents the Madonna and Child ſitting at the foot of a palm tree, and an angel in air: it is known by the name of the *Zingarella* of Correggio. Cardinal Alexander Albani made a preſent of it to King Auguſtus. Notwithſtanding that, there are people who doubt its being original, and we know for certain there is another on the ſame ſubject, aſſuredly of Correggio, and which came from the gallery of Parma to Capo di Monte; but having been very ill treated, it was repainted by a modern hand; ſo that one may ſay it no longer

exiſts; becauſe we no more behold in it any thing of Correggio *.

Alſo at Florence are found ſome works of Correggio. The largeſt is preſerved in the palace of Pitti, and appears to have ſerved for an altar piece. It is on wood; and the figures are almoſt of natural ſize. There is the Madonna, and Child in her arms, who has a globe of the world in his hand; and Saint Chriſtopher in the act of receiving him upon his ſhoulders.

At the feet of the Madonna is Saint John the Baptiſt, and oppoſite to Saint Chriſtopher is Saint Michael. This painting has always paſſed as a work of Correggio: but it is certain that it is of a particular ſtyle, and little reſembles the beautiful works of that famous author; although in the compoſition it partakes ſomething of his ſtyle. If any one would wiſh to maintain that this is a work of Correggio, he would be obliged to confeſs, that it is not a complete work, becauſe there are many harſh things in it, and no delicacy. To me nevertheleſs it appears, that it is a finiſhed work, becauſe we ſee in it certain things which painters uſe only in finiſhing their paintings; from whence one might conjecture,

* A Parmazan Ex-Jeſuit, in the act of the extinction of his order, ſaved a painting of the ſame ſubject, and ſold it afterwards to Prince Chigi of Rome. It is undoubtedly an original of Correggio as well as that of Capo di Monte. The field has ſuffered much, and has alſo been retouched, particularly in the drapery. The head of the Madonna, the foot, and the child, which are well deſcribed, are painted ſo divinely, that perhaps the world does not produce again any thing ſo beautiful.

that Correggio had left that work imperfect, and that some other painter finished it; or, if he finished it himself, he sought to imitate the Venetian school. There are many persons who absolutely deny it to be a painting of Correggio: however, I do not hazard to determine who else could have made so many beautiful things as it contains.

In the same gallery is a beautiful head painted on wood; and although it is only a first sketch, it is nevertheless so beautifully impasted and coloured, as to give every delight. This head is in every respect similar to the other of that girl who holds in her hand a model of a church at the feet of Saint Geminian, of the aforesaid painting of Saint Sebastian which is at Dresden.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany possesses also another painting on canvas, five palms in height, representing the Madonna on her knees with the Child just born lying on the ground upon a corner of the mantle, without any other figure. This is not the most beautiful of the works of Correggio, because the composition and drapery are but little studied. The head and the hands of the Madonna are painted wonderfully; but with less force than the other classical works of our author.

In Rome, in the gallery of the house of Colonna, is preserved a painting of Correggio on wood, which represents an *Ecce Homo*, with the Virgin who faints behind a Soldier, and at a distance is Pilate; all half figures. This painting belonged to Count Prati of Parma, and appears rather of

the ſecond ſtyle of Correggio than of his higheſt and moſt ſtudied ſtyle; but nevertheleſs it is moſt beautiful, of a good character of deſign, ſingularly impaſted, and of good colouring. Auſtin Caracci engraved it.

In the palace of Prince Doria Panphily at Rome, among other excellent paintings, is preſerved one of Correggio not complete, painted in diſtemper upon canvaſs, whoſe compoſition is Heroical Virtue crowned by Glory, as I have deſcribed when treating of the paintings of France. If this painting is not to be compared to the higheſt perfection of the other moſt excellent works in oil of Correggio, it ſhews, at leaſt, his great knowledge and merit, and his quickneſs in painting; and it ſhews alſo that his grace and excellence ariſe not from the length of time which he employed in his works, nor in the repeated impaſting of the colours, but in the conſtant ſyſtem of having always preſent the effects of truth; becauſe although one ſees in that painting, that in ſome parts it is only ſketched with white and black rather lightly, yet it has all the grace of things finiſhed, and with all the knowledge they require. In other parts where there is a little of colour, one ſees the idea of truth, and above all the great knowledge of the foreſhortenings is ſurpriſing, eſpecially in thoſe parts where any muſcle or fleſh is eminent; becauſe then it goes gradually hiding the other ſucceſſive parts, and clearing the labyrinth of the forms, which is a thing very difficult; from whence, if there are other paintings more beau-

tiful and finiſhed, in no one like that does one ſee better the wonderful merit of Correggio.

The houſe of Barberini anciently poſſeſſed a ſmall painting, repreſenting that paſſage in the Evangeliſt Saint Mark, which ſays, "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth, caſt about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him; and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." They ſay that this painting went from one hand to another, and at laſt remained in England; but latterly has been ſeen in Rome another ſimilar, in poſſeſſion of an Engliſhman. The only difference which appears between them is, that the laſt is painted on canvaſs, and appears the ſtudy and ſketch of the other, becauſe here one diſcovers ſome corrections; a thing which is rare in the paintings of Correggio. Nevertheleſs the figure of the youth is very well finiſhed, and is beautifully impaſted and coloured, and above all is ſingular in the expreſſion and the manner in which he endeavoured to extricate himſelf from his clothes. The Soldier who wiſhes to arreſt him ſeizes the clothes with his right hand, and with the left makes a ſign more to call him than to arreſt him, and it appears that he would wiſh to perſuade him friendly not to fly: this expreſſion explains the character of Correggio, led always by the actions leaſt harſh and violent. From afar one ſees the arreſt of Chriſt in the act when Judas kiſſes him, and St. Peter who cuts off the ear of Malcus. The perſpective and clare obſcure of this painting are of the beſt

ſtyle of Correggio; but that which one here knows clearly to be the moſt ſingular is, that he had preſent the figure of the eldeſt ſon of Laocoon when he made that of the youth; becauſe the head and all the characters of his perſon reſemble him; only the form is more grand, according to the ſtyle of Correggio.

In Saint Louis of the French in Rome, there is a little painting of one palm and an half, which, they ſay, is of Correggio; and repreſents the Madonna of half figure, and the child entire, Saint Joſeph, and two Angels. To me this appears a work of Julius Ceſar Procaccini.

A few years ago was found at Rome, in the poſſeſſion of a dealer in paintings, one which repreſented the Madonna and Child, and with a little Angel, very like one which was engraved by Spier, with the ſole difference that this is round, and the other was a ſquare long. This painting was covered with a thick varniſh which much obſcured and hid the beauty of the painting: for that reaſon it was ſold at a vile price to one Caſanova, a Venetian, who cleaned it very well, but not without injuring that flower of the colours moſt adherent to the varniſh. The poſſeſſor carried that painting for ſale to Dreſden, where probably it is now to be found.

The King of Spain poſſeſſes two ſmall paintings of Correggio. The firſt repreſents Jeſus Chriſt praying in the garden, with an Angel on high, who, with the left hand, points to him the croſs, and the crown of thorns, which are in ſhade upon the ground, and one ſcarcely diſcovers

them; and with the right ſhews, in graceful foreſhortening, the Heavens, as if he ſaid it to be the will of the Father that he ſhould accept the paſſions: in fact, one ſees that our Lord, with open arms, ſhews to accept it. The moſt ſingular part of this piece, beſides the excellent execution of the painting, is the ſtyle with which is managed the clare obſcure; becauſe he figured there that Chriſt received the light from Heaven, and to the contrary the Angel from Chriſt. At a diſtance, and in the loweſt place, are three Diſciples in the moſt beautiful and graceful attitudes, and further on is the crowd of the miniſters of the arreſt. They relate that Correggio gave that painting to his apothecary for four crowns, which he was indebted to him for medicine; and that a little after it was ſold for five hundred; and finally Count Pyrrus Viſconti ſold it to the Marquis of Camarena, governor of Milan, for ſeven hundred and fifty gold doubloons, who bought it in commiſſion for Philip IV. It is preſerved at preſent in the Royal Palace at Madrid, with the eſteem that it merits; and it is no ways injured, as ſome have falſely ſuppoſed.

The ſecond painting repreſents the Madonna who dreſſes the Child; a work of a ſtyle leſs complete, but nevertheleſs ſufficiently beautiful, wonderfully impaſted, and of admirable delicacy. At a diſtance is Saint Joſeph, planing a board, ſo well degraded in the contours, that it ſhews plainly Correggio was a very great maſter in the knowledge of that part of painting which they call *aërial perſpective*; becauſe the things which he

wiſhed to repreſent as ſeen at a diſtance, he has not only ſhaded lighter than the painters do at preſent, but he has diminiſhed alſo the lights, lightened the contours, and confuſed the forms by means of the diſtance; and all without ever departing from the limits of truth.

The Duke of Alva has a painting of Correggio, of figures little leſs than natural, painted on canvaſs, and repreſents Mercury, who teaches Cupid to read in the preſence of Venus. This laſt figure has the peculiarity of having wings, and a bow in the left hand: it is beautiful, and one plainly diſcovers that Correggio, in executing it, had preſent the Apollo of the Villa of Medici, which is now at Florence. The Cupid expreſſes all the innocence of his age: the hair is rich and wonderfully executed; it appears that one ſees the epidermis; and it is finiſhed without appearing dry. His little wings are like thoſe of neſtling birds, who ſtill leave the ſkin viſible, and the quills of the feathers. Whenever Correggio painted wings, he attached them in the ſame manner as in this painting, placing them immediately behind the ſhoulders, in a manner that they united ſo well with the fleſh, that they effectively appeared as a member united with the ſuperior part of the acromion; from whence the deceaſed Duke, who was the poſſeſſor of that painting, was right in telling me that the wings of that Cupid were ſo well ſituated, that if it were poſſible that a child could be born with wings, he could not have them in any other manner.

Generally other painters who make wings, at-

tach them ſo careleſsly, that they appear truly fictitious. Mercury is repreſented as a youth who has not yet done growing, and of an innocent character. That painting is undoubtedly original; not only becauſe it diſcovers the ſovereign excellence of Correggio, but alſo for a correction ſufficiently viſible in the arm of Mercury, that was originally covered with a blue cloth; and one diſtinguiſhes it, as the colour appears through that which was afterwards laid over it. I mention this circumſtance becauſe there exiſts another ſimilar in France, which has not this correction, and might be a copy, or a ſecond. This of the Duke of Alva was bought by one of his anceſtors at London, together with an aſſortment of the famous Arazzi of Raphael, at the ſale of the furniture of the unhappy Charles I. after he was beheaded.

In the grand veſtry of the Eſcurial, is preſerved a painting on canvaſs, of figures three palms in height, and repreſents Chriſt with the Magdalen, when he ſays to her, *Noli me tangere*. This is a painting of the ſame ſtyle of that of the Madonna and Child, which is at Florence, and of which I have already given the deſcription.

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

EXCELLENCE OF CORREGGIO.

IMITATION, which is the greateſt difficulty of the art, having been conquered by ſome able profeſſors, ſuch as Maſaccio, John Bellino, and Andrew Mantegna, who found the mode of expreſſing the different plains, foreſhortenings, and back grounds; thoſe who came after, ſuch as Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Peruginus, Ghirlandajo, and Father Bartholomew of Saint Mark, found leſs obſtacles. The two firſt added a certain grace, the third a little more knowledge in the compoſition, and the laſt a majeſty and artifice in the clare obſcure and drapery, which was till then unknown. But ſince nothing in this world is invented and perfected at the ſame time, the aforeſaid artiſts could not follow that eaſe (the ſure counterſign of perfection in the art), to which afterwards arrived in different degrees Michael Angelo, Titian, Giorgione, and the divine Raphael, who in himſelf alone re-united all the merits which his predeceſſors had poſſeſſed in ſeparate parts, and reduced painting to the higheſt degree

of perfection under the appearance of eaſe. It does great honour to mankind, that with ſuch a genius and ſuch vile materials as ſimple earths, diſtempered and extended upon a plain ſurface, he could know how to imitate all the works of the Creator, and the effects and paſſions of mankind.

But although painting was arrived to a degree ſo eminent, by the terrible forms of Michael Angelo, by the true tones of the colouring of Titian, and by the perfect expreſſion and natural grace of Raphael, it wanted notwithſtanding, always ſomething, that is to ſay, a complex of different excellencies, which is the extreme of human perfection. This complex is in Correggio, who to grandeur and truth united a certain elegance, which generally bears the name of taſte, and which ſignifies the proper and determinate character of things, excluding all the indifferent parts, ſuch as the inſipid and uſeleſs.

Correggio was the firſt who painted with the view of delighting the ſight and the ſouls of ſpectators, and directed all the parts of painting to this end. However, as every painter endeavours in his works to content himſelf, and to imprint in it his genius, one might conjecture, that Correggio poſſeſſed very delicate ſenſibility, a tender and affectionate heart, and a deciſive averſion to things rough and harſh; ſo that if others had painted to ſatisfy their minds, he laboured for the ſatisfaction of his heart, and according to his own ſenſations; from whence he became in the whole the painter of the Graces. No

one, either before or after, has arrived like him to the art of the touch of the pencil; but above all, he has ſucceeded wonderfully in the knowledge of clare obſcure, and in giving relief to things, having eaſily found the juſt medium between the powerful ſtyle and the terrible, or the pleaſing and weak; among the ſpacious and plain, and little relieved ſtyle, and that which contracts too much the lights, and degenerates into minutiæ. Finally, none knew like him how to unite light and ſhade. He underſtood the degradations of theſe, and their reflections in the ſhade, without affectation, becauſe he employed them in a manner, as if the bodies had been mirrors.

The inventions of Correggio are ingenious and beautiful, and often poetical, and his compoſitions are always founded on truth, and the good effect of clare obſcure, ſo that from the firſt lines he began to introduce it with the colours, thinking not only of the imitation of truth, but of the diſtribution of all the parts which ought to enter into his works. To this end, I believe, he painted his ſketches in colours, holding as a principal view the appearance which a painting makes at firſt ſight, becauſe the other parts of painting can convince, but not perſuade one of the goodneſs of a work, when it does not pleaſe. It appears that he did not regard ſo much certain rules, which have ſo much credit in the modern ſchools, although he punctually obſerved all that which reſpects the contrapoſition, and the contraſt of the figures and their members; ſo it appears, that continued variety was his fundamental

rule, which he obſerved not in theſe and other parts, but in the whole.

With regard to the contraſt and the variety of the directions of the members, one ſees by his moſt perfect works, that always when he could, he gave to theſe members a little foreſhortening, and ſeldom made his ſurfaces parallel; which gives a wonderful effect to all his compoſitions.

It is neceſſary however to confeſs, that ſometimes (although ſeldom) ſearching with too much earneſtneſs the variety of the ſituations, particularly that of the hands, gave him a certain affectation of grace which does not appear natural; a defect which Raphael always avoided.

Some have taxed Correggio with little exactneſs of deſign; which is, rigorouſly ſpeaking, a falſe accuſation.

It is however true that he did not chooſe the objects in forms ſo ſimple as the ancients, nor the muſcles ſo marked as Michael Angelo, nor made pomp of the knowledge of nudity, like the Florentine School. Except that, he deſigned moſt correctly the objects he had to repreſent, nor in any of his original works does one find any thing which one might call incorrect.

Above all, it will be ſufficient to eternalize his glory, that the Caraccis, and particularly Hannibal and Lewis, formed their ſtyle of deſign upon that of Correggio, as one might ſee by all the works that they did before they came to Rome.

It appears as if Correggio had conſidered all the forms of nature, which were not altered by

artifice, as if they were compoſed of curved, concave, and convex lines, and that they could vary only in their ſize or proportions; ſo that he avoided all that which was angular, and in conſequence, minutiæ and dryneſs, in which error generally fell the painters of the anterior ſchools. Avoiding therefore ſtraight lines, he choſe almoſt always the curved or ſerpentine, like the letter S; and with that he thought to give greater grace; having without doubt obſerved, that the difference between the dry and beautiful ſtyle of the ancients is principally becauſe the contours and the forms of the firſt are compoſed of ſtraight, and ſome curved and convex lines, whilſt the ſecond is ſolely varied with curves: nor did the ancients do this from caprice, or from predilection of taſte, but from the preciſe imitation of truth, and the knowledge of anatomy and the ſtructure of the human body, where the obliqueneſs of the muſcles, and the variety of their poſitions upon the tortuoſity of the bone, form that alternative of curve: and ſince fleſhy and muſcular bodies have always more convex forms, and theſe larger in the concave, to the contrary the feeble have leſs convexity, and the greateſt concavity; for that reaſon Correggio preferred the middle way, without ever departing by that from truth.

It is not eaſy to determine if the knowledge of clare obſcure, and the imitation of truth in that part have conducted Correggio to the knowledge of the forms and contours, and of their interior; and if by any other way, or by the ſtudy of that

principal part of painting, he obtained that perfection which one admires in his works.

It is certain that, after Raphael, no one underſtood perſpective better than him, which has ſo much contributed to the deſign of his naked figures, and that no one, except perhaps Michael Angelo, knew like Correggio the ſcience of the forms, and conſtruction of the human figure. Clare obſcure is ſo inſeparable from deſign, that the one cannot perfectly exiſt without the other; becauſe, deſign being deprived of clare obſcure can only repreſent a kind of ſection, parallel with the ſurface upon which one paints, nor will ever arrive to expreſs the true form of things. Correggio knew how to unite theſe two qualities with ſo much perfection, that one ſees them combined in his works the ſame as in nature; and it appears impoſſible that he had been able to attain this ſo egregiouſly without having much ſtudied relief, and ſculpture, becauſe pure truth without the aforeſaid ſtudies would not be ſufficient to teach a thing ſo difficult; and for that reaſon Michael Angelo modelled firſt in earth, or in wax, thoſe figures which he had to paint; as he himſelf refers in a letter to Varchi: nor before him was there a painter who dared to uſe foreſhortenings and contractions and extenſions of the muſcles, and of the forms of the centre to the circumference, as he did.

From whence, if, in modelling, Buonarroti taught this ſtyle, which is naturally his, it will not be ſurpriſing that the knowledge of beautiful contours, and the grand ſtyle of Correggio

ariſe from the ſame origin; that is, from the ſtudy of relief, and modelling his figures: it being known to us that he uſed the *plaſtica*.

Beſides that part of clare obſcure which regards the expreſſion of the forms, Correggio was alſo ſuperior to all other painters in the general clare obſcure; that is, in the general diſpoſal of lights and ſhades, becauſe that ſame gradation which he uſed in one part, or in one figure, he uſed alſo in an entire piece, diſtributing the lights in ſuch a manner that the firſt is only one; and the ſame may be ſaid of the ſecond, and the others. Thus is his ſhade all varied, but ſometimes with force and ſometimes with grandeur, and many times only by the quality of the colours of which they are compoſed. He managed the contraſts with ſoftneſs, nor ever put the greateſt clares in contrapoſition to the greateſt obſcures, without forming ſomething which would take from their aſperity, or placing them by the ſide of ſome greater ſhade. Beſides that, he conſidered that all bodies are of ſuch a nature, that they do not retain all the rays of light which they receive; and that they ſpread or reflect the major part at all ſides, according to the figure of the ſuperfice; for which reaſon they ought neceſſarily to mix with the light ſhades which are in the maſs of illuminated bodies.

Correggio wonderfully underſtood the aërial perſpective of the clare obſcure, and colours, but without the affectation of ſome very modern painters; nor ſolely underſtood the gradations of the tints. But he had beſides obſerved, that if, in nature, ſhades loſe their force in diſtance,

lights loſe it much more; and that little things are the firſt to be confuſed. From whence he inferred, that the contours languiſh and are loſt at a little diſtance, terminating in pure points, the laſt extremes of bodies which one cannot perfectly ſee. With regard to colours, he knew very well thoſe which loſe more or leſs their activity in the intermediate ambient. In ſhort, he perfectly poſſeſſed that art by which painting delights and deceives the ſenſes.

His colouring is moſt beautiful, but appears alſo more ſo from the perfect gradation of the tints, and that pleaſing and diligent manner of impaſting his paintings, which added to his ſimple colours a certain clearneſs to be found in Correggio alone: ſo that, in his works, one cannot determine whether he were moſt excellent or intelligent either in the forms, the colouring, clare obſcure, or in the manner of extending the colours; becauſe whoever conſiders all that, will find that he was equally a maſter in all theſe parts, and that in all he had made the moſt profound reflections. What arduous ſtudy does it not require to poſſeſs an art ſo difficult, and to form a habit of working with ſo much excellence!

It is certain, that he who poſſeſſes in perfection the greateſt number of the parts of painting will be found the moſt excellent; and it is alſo certain, that Raphael and Correggio are for that reaſon the two greateſt painters; and theſe eſpecially arrived to the accompliſhment of expreſſing in one ſole point all the apparent and

pleaſing effects of nature. It is true, that Titian was ſo great a maſter in colouring, that, by his tints, he merited the firſt rank in that part; but he did not poſſeſs that perfect gradation, which expreſſes the moſt delicate and almoſt inſenſible forms; and which contributes much to the imitation of truth, and ſometimes more than colouring itſelf: and by that we ſee that many works of Correggio done in freſco, with a tone of the tint low and pallid, can enchant by tranſporting the ſpectator from the idea of fiction to that of truth; which is the primary end every painter ought to aim at.

Correggio was the firſt who made drapery enter in the invention of compoſition; either in the effect of clare obſcure, colouring, and of harmony, as for the direction and contraſt. He took leſs care of each particular fold, than of the maſs of the drapery; from whence he opened a new way of diſpoſing well the drapery in large works: and in that he was very well imitated by Lanfranco and others.

I have ſaid that Correggio unitedly poſſeſſed thoſe various parts of painting which ſingly have made illuſtrious painters; as truth and grace made Raphael illuſtrious, cheerfulneſs Leonard, impaſting Giorgione, and colouring Titian. I confeſs, however, that in each of theſe things ſeparately, he was leſs excellent than them. He knew, notwithſtanding, how to unite the whole as they are in nature, and to temperate, by his modeſt and ſoft genius, thoſe which are very violent, and to combine them with his

philoſophical underſtanding; ſo that whatever he knew how to expreſs ſeparately, he wiſhed to ſee united; and he ſucceeded in it.

But however great I conſider Correggio, I do not ſtill think him greater than Raphael. It is well known that his paintings are more equal in the execution, and more exquiſite; but with all that he did not poſſeſs in ſo high a degree of excellence as Raphael, the expreſſions of the affections of the mind, which is really that which gives the greateſt nobleneſs to painting, and is equal to the impreſſion which eloquence and poetry make on the minds of men.

Raphael therefore painted with more excellence the effects of the mind, and Correggio the effects of bodies. In viewing a painting of Raphael, one feels more than that which one ſees; and in one of Correggio, the eye ſees more than the mind can comprehend; and the ſenſes remain ſuſpended, and the heart enchanted. Correggio appears finally the painter of Grace.

If Raphael is any thing ſuperior to Correggio, this is much more than all the others who came after him. Until his time, painting always gained: he completed it, and was the meridian of the art: from that point it always went declining, nor do we know how to be able to re-eſtabliſh it; much leſs how to improve it; unleſs there appears ſome great genius who knows how to unite the beauties of the ancients, and thoſe of Raphael, Correggio, and Titian, with the truth of nature.

The knowledge which we have of the great

and intereſting life of Correggio, is confined, confuſed and contradictory. Neither the literati, or painters, who have written the lives of Artiſts, have done him that juſtice which he merited: in the mean time, he was worthy that ſome one ſhould have taken care to inform himſelf well of the circumſtances of a man, to whom the noble art of painting owes ſo much. This negligence is not only an injuſtice to his memory, but a great loſs to community; becauſe there is nothing which ſtimulates geniuſes ſo much as the hiſtories of great men; and often by theſe means the vices of ſelf-love and ambition, change their nature, and are converted into virtue. For this reaſon, it has appeared to me proper to examine, as well as I have been able, this phenomenon of the pictorial hiſtory, to remedy in ſome manner the injuſtice which has forgotten Correggio, by writing with too much prolixity the lives of infinite other painters, from which no inſtruction, utility, or delight, can arrive.

It is very uſeful that men live in the belief that merit is the origin of honour and fortune: by this means they are urged on to follow it. However, it is accidents which generally decide the fate of men; and the ſame virtue in different times and places produces different effects. Anthony Allegri was born in too confined a country, and was inclined by his talent and natural genius to love, and to the deſire of knowledge, and contrary to luxury and vanity: he ought not, therefore, to have expoſed himſelf to the great world; and if he had, his modeſty would have

impeded him from making his fortune where intrigue would have been of more value than merit.

His works evince, that as long as he lived he always endeavoured to render his art more perfect; becauſe in every one is ſeen ſome new improvement. This love of conſtantly ſtudying belongs only to thoſe who are endowed with that happy humility which makes them know how much they are deficient. Having always painted lovelily, and choſen that which was moſt grateful, one might infer that he was of a mild diſpoſition, and of a ſtudious, modeſt, tender, diligent, and philoſophical genius: but all this capital ſeldom leads a man to fortune, if accidents do not drag him there by force. For the ſame reaſons he muſt have been little known to the wealthy and courtezans, and of courſe forgotten by thoſe who praiſe only the artiſts who make much rumour, and acquire them glory and profit. Correggio was ſtudious, and fond of retirement, and living at a little court could not be an object for the hiſtory of ſuch authors. To this I add, that being born after the great men who illuſtrated their age and profeſſion, he ought to be regarded as a youthful painter, and diſciple of thoſe who enjoyed the greateſt reputation, not being known until the age of thirty years, when Titian was ſeventy-ſeven, and Raphael was dead. In ſhort, Correggio was the youngeſt among the great painters who, in the florid time of Italy, have remained ſo famous. The diſtance of more than two ages and an half ſince their death, makes it appear to us as if theyhad flouriſhed in the ſame time.

The retirement in which I have ſaid Correggio lived, and the negligence of the writers of lives, have been the cauſe why Vaſari was ſo ill informed of Correggio, and of other painters of Lombardy. This cauſe pleaſes me more than envy, which many attribute to him. The truth is, that alſo in the moſt indifferent things reſpecting Correggio, as well as things of conſequence, and in the deſcriptions of his paintings, Vaſari ſpeaks with equivocation, nor ſays the truth, as one might ſee in the relation which he gives of thoſe which Correggio painted for the Duke of Mantua, and on other occaſions.

When Vaſari ſays that Correggio had more merit in execution than in deſign, I believe he would not wiſh to be underſtood that he deſigned ill, but that, from an effect of ſelf-love, he deſigned beſt, and ſtudied that moſt in his paintings The Tuſcan ſchool acknowledged with difficulty that any other deſigned like them; and for that reaſon I believe that Vaſari would wiſh to ſay that Correggio did not deſign like Michael Angelo, the hero of his country. This is confirmed by what the ſame Vaſari ſays, confeſſing that the deſigns of Correggio are done in a good ſtyle, beautiful, and with the execution of a maſter. The ſame hiſtorian confines himſelf to praiſe almoſt only the excellence with which Correggio painted the hair; and it is very ſtrange that, before ſo many wonderful things, he found only that praiſe-worthy. It is alſo ſingular that Vaſari, and many others, attribute only the pure gift of nature to the excellence of Cor-

reggio in the art. This is a groſs error; becauſe, although genius can do much, no one who reflects can be perſuaded that that is ſufficient, without great ſtudy, to form a painter ſo ſublime as Correggio *, who, at the age of thirty years, had formed a new ſtyle, and more exquiſite than was ever known before him. Michael Angelo, who had ſo great a genius, did not owe the whole of the art to his natural abilities; nor with theſe alone could he have found the means to exceed the limits of that dry and ſervile ſtyle which till then reigned in Italy; nor without great ſtudy, and the obſervations of the ancient ſtatues, would he have been, perhaps, more than equal to a Donatello, and a Ghilberti. Raphael himſelf has left in his works the traces of his ſtudies; and without the leſſons of Father Bartholemy, and the ſight of the works of Michael Angelo, and thoſe of the ancients, we ſhould not at this time have enjoyed his wonderful paintings. I conclude, therefore, that Correggio ſtudied the works and the maxims of the ancients, and of the beſt maſters, to arrive to be that prodigy of a painter which he was.

I have expreſſed as well as I am able, the motives by which we have not a faithful and circumſtantial hiſtory of the life of Correggio. I have ſaid that which I know, adding the conjectures which appear to me moſt probable. I have deſcribed his works with the greateſt exact-

* Natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte
Quaeſitum eſt. Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena,
Nec rude quid profit video ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice.

neſs this ſhort account would permit; and I have examined the degree of merit of this great man in all the parts of painting. Nothing remains now to ſay, only that Correggio is the modern Apelles, becauſe in compariſon with him he has poſſeſſed the higheſt grace in the art, and with his ſingular works he has taught the perfection which we have to ſearch in the execution of painting, to the end that we might finally arrive to know when we may with propriety call a work complete.

ANNOTATIONS

UPON THE

ANTECEDENT MEMOIRS.

MENGS, as has been ſaid, compoſed theſe memoirs to ſupply the defects in the life of Correggio as written by Vaſari; and as there are many who, from the credit of this author, and of his Annotators, will think that theſe may be calumnies to diſcredit them, I conceive theſe notes neceſſary, in order that the reader may be able to judge on which ſide the truth is.

What Vaſari ſays of Correggio in general, is evident confuſion and contradiction. He makes Correggio to have a timid ſoul, and ſo much a friend to parſimony, that in conſequence of his avarice he became more miſerable than it is poſſible to expreſs.

The works of Correggio, and the expences that attended them, contradict this ſuppoſed avarice; nay, even prove that he was of a moſt liberal turn of ſentiment; and laſtly, that he was not poor, ſince his labours did not render him ſo mean a recompenſe as they would generally wiſh us to underſtand.

As to the arts, Vaſari ſays, that Correggio was in the art very much inclined to melancholy.

I cannot conceive it poſſible for a man to perſuade himſelf that the invention of a painter is melancholic, who, according to the judgment of all the world, compoſed moſt cheerfully; and by which he merited from the public the title of Painter of the Graces; nor is it conſiſtent even with the ſame Vaſari, who ſays, It is held as certain, that no one diſpoſed his colours better than him, nor with greater delicacy. No artiſt painted with more relief; ſuch was the ſoftneſs of the fleſh which he executed, and the grace with which he finiſhed his works. In deſcribing the picture at Parma he ſubjoins—"Near this place is a child who laughs ſo naturally that it moves to laughter whoſoever views it; nor is there any one ſo melancholy, who, on viewing it, does not immediately become cheerful. Are theſe cheerfulneſſes, theſe gaieties of colouring, from a painter ſo melancholic in his art?"

Vaſari in continuation ſays, "If Correggio had left Lombardy and had viſited Rome, he would have performed miracles; becauſe his performances being ſuch, without having viewed the remains of antiquity, or the good works of the moderns, it neceſſarily follows, that if he had ſeen them, he would have infinitely improved his own works, and, by proceeding from good to better, would have arrived at the higheſt perfection."

Setting apart the point already cleared up by Mengs, "if Correggio had been at Rome;" and

even although he had not been there, it is evident that he knew and profited himself of the antique. I should be glad to know what miracles he would have done, and what things (as Vasari thinks) could have been added to the pictures of Correggio; and what conception he had of the works of that artist who asserts, that one could have infinitely improved them. For me, I should hold a man the most extraordinary who could be capable of telling me, and much more of persuading me, of the defects of that painter. And if he should add the knowledge of painting better than him, I should esteem him the greatest artist upon earth. It is not less extraordinary, that one who painted like Vasari, found it so easy, infinitely to amend the works of Correggio. Upon the question so disputed, if Correggio was at Rome, and if he improved himself from the pictures of Melozzo of Forli, which were in the ancient church of the Holy Apostles, I say that various pictures cut from that tribune now exist in the Vatican, in the apartment where Benedict XIII. lived; and which now is the habitation of the Cardinal Zelada, Librarian; where the curious will be able to confront them with those of Correggio.

The manner of the design of Correggio did not please Vasari, since in a marginal note he remarks, that he excelled more in colouring than in design; and immediately in the text he excuses him, on account of the difficulty of possessing all the parts of an art so extensive as that of painting; because many have designed well, and coloured badly, and so on the contrary.

This ſpecies of criticiſm means not otherwiſe than that Correggio did not deſign in the manner that Vaſari did, and that he ſelected different forms from either Vaſari or his ſchool. The one held as good all contortions, and deſigned every thing with force and energy, arrogantly diſplaying his ſkill in anatomy, whilſt the other was all ſoftneſs, ſweetneſs, and grace; but in his manner, Correggio was as able a deſigner as the moſt able Tuſcan: and the ſame Vaſari confeſſes that his deſigns are of a good taſte, that they have grace, and the touch of a maſter.

The annotator of Vaſari goes much further than him, aſſuring us that if the Caraccis had repainted the Tribune of St. John at Parma, which they had already copied from the original, that although they had remained inferior to Correggio in the colouring, they would have equalled, if not ſurpaſſed him in deſign. The Caraccis, who were of ſome conſequence in the world by having ſtudied or imitated Correggio, were ſufficiently modeſt not to aſpire to ſuch an eulogium, and too able in their profeſſion not to know the merit of their maſter. Vaſari, after having exhibited to us the puſillanimity of Correggio, the obſcurity in which he is ſuppoſed to have lived, and that his miſery could not be exceeded, informs us, that the Duke of Mantua choſe him to paint two pictures worthy the acceptance of Charles the Fifth, to whom he wiſhed to preſent them; and that Giulio Romano, who was then in the ſervice of the abovementioned Duke, and not preferred to Correggio, declared to have

never in his life ſeen ſuch colouring. Giulio Romano ſpoke at leaſt of what he had ſeen; but it was not poſſible that Vaſari could have ſeen them, nor could have been well informed of what he writes, becauſe his relation accords in nothing with the truth. The Danae he calls Venus, and ſays that in that picture the landſcape was the moſt beautiful that any Lombard had ever painted, when there is not a ſhadow of a landſcape in that picture; and ſubjoins, That which gave the more grace to the Venus, was a clear and limpid ſtream which ran amongſt ſome rocks bathing her feet. This might in part apply to the Leda, as one may ſee by the deſcription which Mengs gives of it, and in the print taken from this picture: but in the Danae, which Vaſari calls Venus, one finds nothing at all of this; and he who will may ſee it in two copies of this picture ſufficiently exact, which are in Rome, one in the houſe of the Prince Santa Croce, and the other at that of the Marcheſe Orſini de Cavalieri.

Vaſari aſcribes to Correggio the painting of the Tribune of the *Duomo* at Parma, when that *Duomo* never had a Tribune painted by Correggio; it was certainly in the church of St. John: by the ſame miſtake Vaſari places in the above-mentioned *Duomo*, two pictures in oil by Correggio, which have always been in St. John's; but this error has already been remarked by Bottari. Twice Vaſari ſpeaks of the admirable art with which Correggio painted hair. The thing is true; but it appears ridiculous that Correggio

having ſo much merit in the other more noble parts, he ſhould affectedly praiſe this trifling ability.

After the confuſion and diſorder with which Vaſari writes the life of Correggio, and after having accuſed him as a melancholic and puſillanimous painter, and an indifferent deſigner, and ignorant of his own proper merit, &c. &c. he finiſhes by giving him a thouſand encomiums; ſaying, that amongſt thoſe of the profeſſion one admires as divine every thing of his. Vaſari aſſerts his not being able to find the portrait of Correggio, and his annotator Bottari pretends to give it to us diſcovered in a print of Belluzzi, but ſays not from whence he copied it. Every one who ſees this portrait, which repreſents a bald old man, and decrepit, ſees at once that it cannot be the portrait of a man who died at forty years of age.

There was found at Genoa a few years ago, a ſmall picture on wood, eight inches long, the portrait of a man, rather handſome and of a fair complexion, having this inſcription: *Doſſo Doſſi dipinſe queſto ritratto di Antonio da Correggio.* Mengs got a deſign made from it, but I know not what is become of it. I being in Turin ſeven years ago, ſaw in the *Vigna* of the Queen, a ſeries of portraits, amongſt which was one of a middle-aged man with a beard, and light coloured hair, on which was written: *Antonio Allegri da Correggio.* Many have taxed Vaſari of partiality, and many others of envy, in his hiſtory of the lives of the painters, through

negligence, through infidelity, and through the inaccuracy with which he wrote the lives of thoſe who were not Tuſcans, praiſing above the clouds many of them who merited not even to be mentioned. I cannot believe Vaſari ſo malignant, ſince all his writings indicate a goodneſs of heart, and an honeſt man; from whence I think that he praiſed from ſincerity him whom he thought praiſe-worthy according to the beſt of his judgment. Therefore, that which he did not underſtand it was not poſſible for him to praiſe; and if he had known in what conſiſted the grace of the works of Correggio, and the true merit of thoſe of Raphael, he would certainly have praiſed them, confining himſelf to thoſe parts, and would not ſo whimſically have taken the ſubject of praiſing them for their manner of painting hair.

One ſees Vaſari was perſuaded, that beyond the ſchool and manner of Michael Angelo, little good was to be expected from the fine arts. He collected all the little ſtories which vulgarly were prevalent amongſt the profeſſors. He underſtood the arts as a mechanic: he had no better ſkill; and willing to write a voluminous work, he compiled lives in the beſt manner he could, and in a ſtyle inſipid and vulgar, which he uſually ſpoke with his bricklayers and carpenters. Monſignor Bottari, his defender and panegyriſt, excuſes him in another manner, by ſaying, "it is not poſſible that Vaſari would tell a lie in a thing in which he could be convinced with ſo much eaſe." A feeble reaſon indeed! If Vaſari had

even thought ſo, he would not have written falſehoods upon that which he had a thouſand times ſeen with his own eyes, as he does ſpeaking of the pictures of Raphael in the Vatican *.

* The life of Correggio compoſed by Mengs, as I have publiſhed it, has been printed at Finale in 1781, by a certain Carlo Giuſeppe Ratti, who pretending not to know the works of Mengs, gives himſelf as the author of this life; and to give a better appearance to it, he inſerts in this publication a letter which he ſays was written to him by Mengs in 1774, from Madrid, in which he makes that gentleman ſay, that he wiſhes him to collect, and publiſh ſpeedily, the anecdotes of the life and works of Correggio. Therefore he has publiſhed this life, as if it had never been either written or printed by Mengs, although it is truly the very ſame of Mengs. Ratti has however arranged it in his own manner, by changing words and phraſes wherever he treats of the arts, and has believed he has produced a maſter-piece by embroidering it with very precious erudition, as for example: *Correggio is a city equal to every illuſtrious city in Lombardy, and has produced great men of every denomination even unto Cardinals*; and therefore he, Ratti, produces epitaphs, teſtimonials, titles, employments, tombs, dates, chronologies, and many other anecdotes, all very uſeful to painting and painters. He recounts at laſt all the ſcholars of Correggio, and he recounts not a few of them, but makes them all clever, very clever fellows; and then he paſſes to his diſciples, amongſt whom he makes Lanfranco his arch-diſciple, and more than arch-diſciple Ferrari, probably becauſe he was a Genoeſe; and terminates finally with Mengs, whom he pretends to be the faithful imitator of Correggio, without ſpecifying in what he followed him.

Since then this Ratti is wild in publiſhing, it is neceſſary to publiſh him ſuch as he really is. He is a lame Genoeſe with mouth awry, and with the trifling talents of imitating the motions and abſurdities of people. With this deſirable ſtock he flattered the taſte of Mengs, who, notwithſtanding the ſeriouſneſs of his character, was pleaſed to divert himſelf with cheerful and facetious people, even in a ſtyle low and burleſque. For that reaſon, in his hours of repoſe he diverted himſelf frequently with Ratti; and he became ſo attached to him that he fixed him in his houſe, providing him with every thing; and to be of ſome ſervice to him he was willing to make a painter of him, deſigning for him various ſketches in clare obſcure, for a picture of the Nativity of Chriſt, which he was engaged to do for the church of the merchants of Barcelona. This painter, who was no painter, ſelected the moſt beautiful of theſe ſketches about ſix palms in height (it is a capital work that

I poſſeſs). In this manner he made his picture, without any other fatigue than to ſquare and colour it; and by ſo doing he did himſelf immortal honour.

This man would have continued to live in the houſe of Mengs, if, blinded by the favour of his patron, the whim had not come into his head to aſpire to the hand of his daughter. Hardly was this ridiculous pretenſion of his diſcovered, than he was turned out with the approbation of the whole family, and eſpecially with that of the wife of Mengs, who was not pleaſed with the ill-bred manners of this fellow.

This man, nevertheleſs, has always preſerved ſo great a gratitude for Mengs, that, as ſoon as he was dead, he diſembogued his life, in which Mengs would not have known himſelf had he had the opportunity of reading it. He has always called himſelf his friend and diſciple; and laſtly, he has reprinted Mengs's Life of Correggio, giving it as his own proper work. This is the conduct of Carlo Giuſeppe Ratti!

To know better the character of this man, behold one of his letters written to Mengs, and choſen among many, becauſe here he ſpeaks of the above praiſed ſketch of the precept.—We ſhall give it in the original, not being poſſible or neceſſary to tranſlate it.

Roma, 27 Febbraro 1773.

" Oggi dopo pranzo, dopo aver portata una lettera e raccomandatala caldamente alla poſta di Napoli, non potendo io quietare " per non aver V. S. ricevuti li noti bozzetti, ſono andato dal " Signor Agente, il quale ſta male per eſſer egli ſtato aſſalito da " una fiera colica, che dette molto da temere; e da lui ho ſaputo " che ſubito conſegnò al Corriere per mezzo del Maſtro di poſta " l'involto; onde ſon andato ad eſſo Maſtro di poſta, e mi ha detto " averlo egli ſteſſo premuroſamente conſegnato; che perciò ne " faccino ricerca in Segreteria di Stato e dal Signor Tanucci, " perchè non ſi puol eſſere ſmarrito in verun modo. Dio mio! Se " io ſupponeva queſto, mi abbozzava il mio Quadro da quel bozzetto a chiaroſcuro, quello come io ſcriſſi allora, che avea il S. " Giuſeppe di ſchiena in avanti, ed il paſtore colla pecora, perchè " quanto più me lo ricordo, mi par coſa divina.

" A' Liberti ſeguita la ſolita burletta con Muſica d'Anfoſſi, " perchè Roma tuttodì vi accorre come ſe foſſe la prima ſera: ed " è coſa particolare a vedere la forza della Muſica con quattro o " ſei ſcannati muſicacci che cantano, e non vagliono un bajocco, e " pure compariſcono valentuomini. A Valle li ſecondi intermezzi " mi dicono che hanno in contrato terribilmente, e ſono Muſica " d'un Marcellino da Capua, che ha compoſto per la ſeconda " commedia che dovea andare in ſcena ai Liberti, ma che metteranno fuori al più tardi perchè ſono troppo al ſicuro della " prima. In Argentina la Muſica è di Anfoſſi pure, e piace molto " due arie ed un duetto di Tenducci. Quelle di Mazzante piac-

" ciono tutte, ma perchè quelle le canta di ſuo, perchè come è il
" primo Maeſtro di Cappella del Mondo, così non vuole la ſua
" modeſtia che ſi ſoggetti ad alcuno. Nella prima opera che
" andette per terra affatto, ne fu fatta una curioſa, e fu, che venne
" mandato un facchino a Compoſtof con un paolo ed un biglietto,
" dove veniva ſupplicato il ſignor Impreſſario a conſegnare al latore
" un paolo di bollettini, e metterglieli in una ſporta che a tale effetto
" gli mandavano. Mi conſervi la ſua grazia."

A DISCOURSE

UPON THE

ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS AT MADRID.

BY an *academy* is underſtood an aſſembly of men the moſt expert in ſcience or in art, their object being to inveſtigate truth, and to find fixed rules always conducing to progreſs and perfection. It is very different from a ſchool in which able maſters teach the elements of ſciences or of arts. The fine arts, as liberal ones, have their fixed rules founded in reaſon and on experience, by which means they join to obtain their end, which is the perfect imitation of nature; from whence an academy of theſe arts ought not to comprehend alone the execution, but ought to apply principally to the theory and to the ſpeculation of rules, ſince indeed theſe arts terminate in the operation of the hand; but if this is not directed by good theory, they will be deprived of the title of liberal arts.

Some erroneouſly think that practice alone is of more importance than all the rules together, and without them there have been great artiſts. Falſe are ſuch ideas, and ſo falſe that they merit not a confutation. Whatever is done without reaſon and

without rules is all hazard. How is it poſſible to arrive to a determinate end without a ſure guide to conduct us? Painting and ſculpture are arts ſimilar to poetry; and as in this laſt art, ſenſibility, imagination and genius, can never produce, without rules and knowledge, any thing but dreams and monſtrous productions, the ſame muſt happen in the two firſt. Therefore, as the poet, without knowing profoundly the ſubject which he has to treat and the language in which he is to explain himſelf, can never produce a perfect work, neither will the painter or ſculptor know how to perform a work worthy theſe profeſſions, if they know not the forms of the bodies which they imitate, and the diverſity of manners with which they preſent them to our ſight; and the ſame will happen if they know not the theory of the art.

I do not, however, ſay that theory alone ought to exclude the exerciſe of the hand; on the contrary, I infinitely recommend it: both ought always to be united; and in this ſenſe ought to be underſtood the oracle of Michael Angelo, who was wont to ſay that all the art conſiſted in the *obedience of the hand to the conception.* This great man well underſtood that images ought to be well imprinted on the mind, and the idea of every thing which the hand ought to execute. From whence it is neceſſary always to have practice, but with the knowledge of why and wherefore.

The able profeſſors of an academy ought to endeavour, by conferring together, to find out certain rules, by which ſtudents may be able

to abbreviate the courſe of arts ſo extenſive. Theſe rules will be preſcribed to youth as fundamental laws, explaining to them reaſons by clear demonſtrations, which not only may convince, but perſuade, ſince without perſuaſion one is not capable of doing any thing perfect.

All academies of arts have begun from being ſchools, and afterwards have been transformed into what we call academies, that is to ſay, ſocieties of profeſſors, who by their conferences and diſcourſes promote inſtructions, and have merited the protection of princes. In this manner have begun the academies of Rome, Bologna, Florence and Paris, &c. &c.

The utility of ſuch eſtabliſhments conſiſts in the advancement of arts, and in the influence which they occaſion in a nation by diſſeminating there a good taſte: ſince it is the intelligence of deſign which directs all arts treating of figures or of forms. This utility cannot poſſibly be obtained by any academy, if good reaſoning and the aforeſaid theory of deſign are not publicly taught; becauſe, without theory, deſign is only a practical and material action which produces the figure alone that one circumſcribes, without giving to it a general intelligence, or inſtructing how to judge of the forms. For which reaſon, every academy which follows not the above-mentioned maxims, will have material deſigners and artiſans, but not illuminated and excellent artiſts; and in conſequence will operate againſt its principal end, and will waſte the time that it employs in bad inſtructions.

Applying now the diſcourſe to the academy of St. Ferdinand, let us ſee what reaſon finds there good or bad eſtabliſhed for the profit of the nation. The aforeſaid academy began by deſign and modelling, as all others, and the generoſity of the founder endowed it perhaps more amply than any other academy in Europe. Many believe that the fruit which it has produced abundantly correſponds to its inſtitution; but as good as a thing may be, it is always ſuſceptible of improvement, therefore it appears to me that ſomething could be rectified.

This academy is governed by thoſe who ought to protect it, that is to ſay, by counſellors, who by their high birth, employments, and circumſtances, have not had an opportunity of inſtructing themſelves fundamentally either in works or concerning artiſts. They are thoſe who vote and accept or refuſe perſons who aſpire to the honour of being admitted into the academy. Hence, favours do not depend on thoſe who are capable to judge of merit. It is, however, true that theſe gentlemen, before they decide, hear the profeſſors in all things reſpecting art; but if they are obliged to regulate themſelves according to theſe councils, their deciſion is uſeleſs; for what uſe can it be to have the propoſitions of thoſe who cannot decide, and let thoſe decide who cannot propoſe? In all other academies of the world, there are profeſſors who vote and decide abſolutely in what reſpects the government of them, and as to the merit of individuals and their works; and the princes and nobles reſerve no other privilege to themſelves than that of protecting and honour-

ing the art and artiſts. This protection ought to be effective, and not a mere appearance, by diſtinguiſhing the profeſſors according to their merit, and not confounding them with artiſans, and employing them in works of importance; becauſe, if the nobles and rich men of a kingdom have not an inclination to encourage works, and ſo to diffuſe the taſte of arts throughout a nation, they will periſh for want of ſupport; becauſe, if the king alone employs artiſts, he cannot employ more than a limited number, and the taſte of the arts concentres itſelf in his perſon alone, cauſing barbariſm in all the remaining part of the kingdom; as in another place has been ſaid to have happened from the reign of Philip II. unto that of our ſovereign, notwithſtanding they loved and protected the arts, and chiefly that of painting, and nevertheleſs good taſte has never diffuſed itſelf generally through the nation. Theſe circumſtances being ſuppoſed, the academy of Madrid is to be conſidered either as an academy or a ſchool, or both together. Whichever of theſe things it may be, it is always required that the members who compoſe it be maſters the moſt expert in the arts, ſince the academicians ought to be capable of explaining the definitions of the art from whence the rules are deduced, becauſe, to act like a maſter, it is neceſſary to know well the profeſſion. Academic diſcourſes diſcover the difficulties of the art to youth who are willing to profeſs it, and place the *dilettantis* in a ſituation to underſtand, and to be capable of ſoundly judging of works. This circumſtance

is ſometimes more neceſſary in Spain than in other places, becauſe the generality of the nation have not a juſt idea of arts, and of their dignity, or of many gifts from heaven, or of ſtudy, which ought to concur to make a great artiſt. The abovementioned diſcourſes, and academic conferences, will alſo ſerve to profeſſors themſelves, becauſe not all know ſcientifically the principles of their profeſſion, and will be by theſe means ſtimulated to ſtudy them. Finally, in conſequence of examining matter, one ſhall deſtroy by little and little the falſe maxims that may have intruded themſelves in the rules of the arts. Youth will have another advantage in hearing the great difficulties that attend the arts in the difficult ſtudy that they purſue; for then would generous ſouls alone undertake them, and thoſe who diſcover leſs force and leſs talents would abandon the undertaking, or would be content to apply themſelves to a part proportioned to their capacity. In this manner every talent would remain at liberty, nor would be conſtrained to the uniformity of ſtudy; and that which imports more, it would acquire art, but not the particular ſtyle of any maſter.

The greateſt utility which, as I think, would ariſe from ſuch ſtudies, would be that the nobility and wealthy would inſtruct themſelves in the principles of the arts, and would conceive for them a proper love and eſteem; as in many of them there is a natural diſpoſition, and nothing is wanted but to have heard profeſſors who could make them perceive the importance, dignity and

ſplendour of the arts. Hiſtory offers to us the neceſſity of this eſteem, ſince wherever it is wanting, the arts and ſciences are infallibly wanting alſo. The Egyptians, who invented almoſt all the arts, never perfected any one, becauſe they did not honour their profeſſors, not conſidering them otherwiſe than as artiſans. The Phœnicians advanced them a little more, becauſe they gave as an object to the arts the utility of commerce. Greece, and particularly in learned Athens, where there was a greater equality of perſons in the ſtate, and where the arts and ſciences were eſteemed little leſs than divine, and where ingenuity led to the higheſt ſituation of citizenſhip, it was there where painting, ſculpture, and architecture flouriſhed moſt worthily. The Romans never equalled the Grecians in theſe profeſſions, becauſe their road to honour was in the military ſervice, and they availed themſelves of the artiſts of conquered Greece, reduced to a ſevere ſervitude. Whence they debaſed the artiſts and their works. I therefore conclude that, to the end that the arts may flouriſh in a nation, it is not only neceſſary that their works may be eſteemed, but that the artiſts may be proportionately honoured, ſince otherwiſe no generous ſoul will ſacrifice his labours and his life in a profeſſion which, inſtead of bringing him honour, diſcredits him; for which reaſon the puſillanimous alone will apply themſelves to arts, who aſpire to nothing but intereſt, and are incapable of the ſublime conceptions that the arts require, becauſe the work itſelf is always the por-

trait of the ſoul of the artiſt. Every nation would acquire great advantages if its firſt nobles and moſt powerful people attached themſelves to the arts, as we ſee to have happened in all ages when they have flouriſhed; and ſome of them cultivated them ſufficiently to be enabled to underſtand them, as we have various examples, and eſpecially that of the Emperor Adrian. Then they aſſuredly elevate themſelves to the utmoſt perfection, becauſe knowing their merits they cheriſh them, and employ artiſts by putting them in a ſituation to diſplay their talents; for it is no leſs advantageous to profeſſors to be employed, than to learn, the one remaining uſeleſs without the other.

Conſidering now the academy of Madrid as a ſchool, it is neceſſary to make ſome reflections. Even to theſe latter times good examples of the arts were here wanting. In this, however, they have at laſt been ſupplied, the academy being now poſſeſſed of the beſt and moſt copious collection of caſts of the antique ſtatues that are in Europe. From this one now is in a capacity to learn proportions, the art of expreſſing anatomy without harſhneſs, a ſelection of fine forms, and the true character of beauty. Yet according to my belief much time is wanted to acquire an uniform ſyſtem of deſign, and ſome neceſſary parts of art which they either do not teach, or teach improperly. Upon theſe matters I will ſpeak my opinion ingenuouſly.

Although there are found in Madrid many profeſſors of merit, one cannot deny but there have

been, and that there are now elſewhere, ſchools more reputable. One ought not, therefore, to give as an example to youth the particular works of the artiſts of this academy, but one ought to take the beſt works of every ſchool, and of all the moſt celebrated profeſſors. In this manner boys, from their moſt tender age, will accuſtom themſelves to a good ſtyle. Another very great advantage will reſult from it, which is, that the maſters of the academy will be able to ſpeak with freedom, not being led away by ſelf love or by human prejudices, which prevent a man from ſpeaking frankly his ſentiments, there where he ſpeaks of his own work, or of his aſſociates, having themſelves many reaſons to palliate their own opinions.

It would be alſo very convenient that profeſſors ſhould give a good example in deſigning and of modelling together with their ſcholars in the modelling room, by this means animating the youth and the profeſſors themſelves in the inferior claſſes: this ſtudy being much more uſeful to the advanced than to ſcholars. Above all it would be neceſſary that one ſhould examine with the greateſt attention every thing propoſed to youth; not ſubmitting to the caprice of particulars the introductions of vicious examples, ſince it is much more difficult to undo a vice acquired in early years, than to learn a thouſand good things.

The time that is deſtined in the academy for ſtudy is neither ſufficient or proper, becauſe the hours of the night are few for a ſtudy ſo ex-

tenſive; and the ſpirits of a youth, diſtracted by the occupations of the day, have not the neceſſary activity for learning, and for fixing in the memory the things that are taught him. It would be therefore neceſſary, ſince the academy is to be alſo a ſchool, to do that which is practiſed in the ſchools of other branches, that is to ſay, to employ in ſtudy the later hours of the day, with the aſſiſtance of profeſſors of an inferior rank, and thoſe ſhould give an account to the ſuperior of the progreſs and of the mode of teaching. This exerciſe would be, beſides that, very uſeful to themſelves; and the principal maſters ought to review the ſtudies of youth, in order to change the claſſes according to their progreſs.

The exerciſe of night ought to ſerve only for thoſe who, being already advanced in the theory of the art, have occaſion to augment the practice by frequent uſe, becauſe otherwiſe, with the ſolicitude with which they ought to work at night, pupils accuſtom themſelves to an incorrectneſs which degenerates into a vicious negligence, there not being time to obſerve well the rules and the reaſons of art; and thoſe who begin to copy rudiments have not ſufficient time to ſee the fruit of their application, whence many diſcourage themſelves and abandon the ſtudy already begun. In ſhort, if the academy is to be a ſchool, it is neceſſary to practiſe there all that which a vigilant and good maſter ought privately to do for his own diſciples; otherwiſe it will never become an uſeful ſchool.

If laws, and the maxims of public lectures, are

not fixed in a manner that youth learn as if they ſtudied under one maſter only, they will confuſe the diſciple by following different, and ſometimes contradictory rules.

For that reaſon it would be neceſſary, that profeſſors congregate themſelves and well examine matters: they ſhould conſult and determine the method which ought to be followed, weighing well reaſons, pro and contra, reſerving nevertheleſs to amend them, whenever experience and reaſon may indicate the neceſſity.

The things which ought to be taught with a greater diligence are, linear and aërial perſpective, ſelecting notwithſtanding a ſhort method. Then comes anatomy, not as phyſicians and ſurgeons learn it, but as it is ſuitable to the arts, which have for their object the imitation of the exterior forms of things: and as amongſt all the bodies of nature there is not for man any thing more noble, and more worthy than the human figure, it is very neceſſary for him to know it exactly, both in the whole and in its parts, and this is taught us by anatomy. Whence it is that perſpective ſhews to us the manner of imitating the appearance of forms, which one cannot execute without knowing it anatomically. For this reaſon, this ſcience is equally neceſſary to the ſculptor and the painter.

Nor is leſs precious the ſtudy of ſymmetry, that is to ſay, of the proportions of the human body, without which it is not poſſible to know how to ſelect from nature the moſt perfect bodies. By this the ancient Greeks diſtinguiſhed

themſelves ſo ſuperiorly from us; and they derived beauty, grace and animation from the knowledge of proportions.

The art of light and ſhade, which is called clare obſcure, ought to be taught with the ſame accuracy, ſince without it painting cannot have any relief: therefore it is neceſſary to conſider it as an eſſential part, ſo much the more as painters have not always the opportunity of ſeeing things according to nature; and when even they have, it is not ſo eaſy to underſtand the reaſons of them, and to keep faſt to truth by not permitting themſelves to be tranſported by any practical rules followed by ignorant people, and learned without reflection from their maſters. Finally, clare obſcure is a part doubly uſeful, becauſe it pleaſes the intelligent as well as thoſe who are not ſo.

I know not if leſſons of colouring have ever been given, notwithſtanding it is a part ſo principal in painting, that it has its rules founded on ſcience and reaſon. Without ſuch ſtudy, it is impoſſible that youth can acquire a good taſte in colouring, or underſtand harmony.

In the ſame manner it is neceſſary to teach invention and compoſition without omitting the art of compoſing drapery. All theſe have equally their fixed rules; rules neceſſary to be learned, to underſtand what one ſees in nature. I will not ſay that with theſe rules alone, and without talents, it is poſſible to acquire the arts: I ſay, however, that without them, no one will ever arrive to be an excellent artiſt; and if even all

the rules are not ſuſceptible of demonſtration, thoſe indeed which reſpect imitation they abſolutely admit, and thoſe of election have their reaſons almoſt evident.

Some poſſibly will ſay, that all this ſtudy that I propoſe for an academy, could be done by ſome maſter profeſſor in his own houſe to his diſciples. To me it appears otherwiſe, believing it impoſſible that any one man can know equally well ſo many things; and if indeed he knew them, I know not if he would have time or convenience to teach them. Beſides which it might happen, that amongſt thoſe who ſtudy under a particular maſter one would find ſome of talents, which by defect of good inſtruction, or from ſome other motive, cannot arrive to make him a man of great merit; whilſt in a public ſchool he will have occaſion to develop his own ingenuity, and to diſtinguiſh himſelf by emulation, and from a poor unhappy man render himſelf an artiſt, who may give honour to the art, and glory to his country.

Although architecture may be a part conſtituent of an academy equally with that of painting and ſculpture, I have not ſpoken of it, not being willing to go out of my profeſſion; but I believe that without entering into the foundation of it, one may ſay, that ſince the academy will be a ſchool of the fine arts, architecture ought alſo to be taught there, ſince one conceives not what a ſchool is without lectures.

Although architecture has not in nature any prototype ſufficiently known to recur to, like

painting and ſculpture, it has nevertheleſs certain rules of convenience which form its taſte, and theſe may be good or bad as in the other fine arts. That which is to be propoſed to youth is perfection; that is, that which ages and reaſon have authorized as the beſt, viz. the primitive Greeks. Whoever ſtudies and knows by memory the dimenſions and proportions of Vignola, or ſome ſuch ſimilar author, will not for that reaſon only have a taſte for good or bad architecture; as he who knows the mechanic meaſure of verſes will not be more a poet on that account. The Vignolas are to Vitruvius, what the Gradus ad Parnaſſum is to the Poetic of Horace. Examples by being ſuch ought not to be propoſed, if the author from whom they come merits it not; and this is exactly that which the profeſſors of an academy ought to examine.

They ought eſpecially to make a great diſtinction between architecture and the art of building, a circumſtance which even in the frontiſpiece of books is wont to be confounded. Invention and taſte make an architect; mathematics and phyſics are his ſervants and miniſters: the firſt is as the head of a man, and the ſecond as his hands. Invention requires great talents, well cultivated, and the art of building is all mechanical and material. At thoſe, who by this laſt road pretend to be architects, and great men, Martial laughs, when he adviſes a father to make his ſtupid ſon an architect:

> Si duri puer ingenii videtur,
> Praeconem facias vel architectum.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

UPON

PAINTING.

INTRODUCTION.

RULES FOR MASTERS, IN ORDER TO TEACH WELL THE ART OF PAINTING, AND FOR PUPILS TO LEARN IT AS THEY OUGHT.

SINCE painting is a liberal art, it muſt neceſſarily have a method; and if it has a method, it muſt conſequently have ſure and certain rules. I therefore think it will be uſeful for me to ſet forth here, what reflections every young man ought to make before he begins this profeſſion, and the path he ought to follow after he has undertaken it, that he may always advance the more in his career; and at the ſame time, I ſhall ſay how the maſter ought to conduct himſelf in order to teach his art. Therefore, according to my cuſtom, I give up all pretenſions to eloquence, and ſhall endeavour to explain myſelf as ſimply as poſſible, in order to be underſtood by all claſſes of people.

The firſt quality a boy ought to have who is deſtined by his ſuperiors to follow painting (I ſay ſuperiors, becauſe this profeſſion muſt be commenced before we have a will of our own), is penetration, attention, and patience; and we muſt not ſuffer ourſelves to be dazzled by that vivacity, nor by that fire which is commonly taken for genius, but is not it in reality: on the

contrary, that vivacity often prevents children from reflecting upon things, and consequently from making improvements in painting. We must therefore mind not to be deceived in taking for a genius for painting that inclination to be painters, which is seen in many children. The fortunes made by some painters induce many parents to bring their children up to this profession, who, after having studied it for a long time, quit it with the same levity with which they undertook it.

In order to shun these inconveniencies, a master who is both skilful and honest, should, before he takes a boy, examine well him and his parents. In the boy he ought to expect only penetration, patience, a love for work, and particularly an exact sight. The father ought to be perfectly disinterested, and have a strong inclination to afford his son every necessary help; and he must not do as many who call themselves friends, in having paid for a youth a master for a short time.

If the boy is found to be possessed of all the requisite qualifications, the master must on his side begin by divesting himself as much as he can of his self-love, and teach him all he knows, all he has learnt, and what has not been taught him by any one, and above all he must never be apprehensive of teaching too much; and if unfortunately he should be infected with this foible, I would advise him never to be a master, for it would not be acting as an honest man, wilfully to bring up people to be wretched;

nor do I ſee a greater misfortune for a man than to have waſted his youth to become a bad painter: and as that depends on the maſter, he can eaſily avoid this evil, ſince no one has a preciſe obligation to inſtruct pupils.

It is true, that the world is full of ingratitude, and that a ſkilful painter in giving his pupil a good education runs the riſk of bringing up a viper in his own boſom: but other men's vices are not an excuſe for ours; nor can that painter ever exculpate himſelf, who in bringing up a youth is the cauſe of his repenting all his life having undertaken this profeſſion. Thoſe profeſſors who by powerful recommendation and without intereſt ſee themſelves compelled to receive pupils, if they do not teach them with requiſite care and application, are nevertheleſs excuſable; for it is certain that it coſts more time and more trouble to finiſh a good pupil, than the largeſt picture in the world. Therefore it ſeems to me very unjuſt for patrons to pretend, that an artiſt ſhould loſe his time in teaching the art to thoſe who bring him no profit or intereſt in doing it. This unreaſonable practice generally prevails in Italy, which by degrees ruins painting, and the youths who are brought up to it, in ſpite of the fine geniuſes which are to be found. But I ſhall quit this ſubject, which draws me from my object, and proceed to the rules and reaſons of the art, which I propoſed to myſelf to explain, and therefore ſhall employ a kind of dialogue, by queſtions and anſwers.

Q. How can one know if a child has the neceſſary diſpoſitions for painting?

A. If he has more ſenſe than vivacity, one may conceive good hopes.

Q. What age ſhould the beginner be of?

A. The more tender, the more proper to begin, for from four years he may learn ſomething; and then it will be eaſier for him to acquire a preciſion of ſight, as his organs will not have contracted any particular habit.

Q. And if he began later, could he ever be a good painter?

A. Undoubtedly; but it would coſt him much more trouble: for he muſt neceſſarily have employed the preceding time in ſomething, which muſt take up ſome part of his memory, and prevent him from learning painting with the ſame facility.

Q. Nevertheleſs, have there not been eminent painters, who have begun their ſtudies at an advanced age?

A. Yes. But the greateſt men have all learned painting from their moſt tender infancy. Raphael was ſon to a painter, who perhaps made him begin painting as ſoon as reaſon appeared in him. Titian began when a child. Michael Angelo handled the marble at twelve. Correggio having lived only forty years, left ſo great a number of excellent works that they could not have been done in haſte, and he muſt neceſſarily have begun to work very early. It is however true, that ſome good painters have begun later; but if they ſucceeded on account of their extraordinary abili-

ties, how much more would they not have excelled if they had begun at an earlier age!

Q. What is the firſt thing a maſter ought to teach his pupil?

A. As it is not eaſy to diſcover ſoon the genius and character of children, it is neceſſary to make them begin by drawing geometrical figures, but without rule or compaſſes, that they may accuſtom their ſight to exactneſs, which is the fundamental baſis of deſign; ſince there is no object, whoſe outlines, and form, are not compoſed of figures, and ſimple or compound geometrical lines. Therefore, if the child knows how to make theſe figures by the eye, he will know how to draw accurately any thing, and will eaſily conceive all the proportions.

Q. Will it not be better to make him draw the human figure, which, if compoſed of geometrical figures, will teach at once what by the other means is learnt at twice?

A. This advice is very pernicious; becauſe the beauty of the outlines of the human figure depends on expreſſing rightly all the imperceptible lines and broken forms, which form a whole of geometrical figures intermixed and confuſed with each other; ſo that it is impoſſible for a child to conceive them with clearneſs and preciſion, and ſtill more difficult for the maſter to judge by them of the exactneſs of ſight of his pupil; whereas in a ſimple triangle, for inſtance, it is eaſy to know the defects and faults committed by the eye or the hand.

Q. What is the fault of the eye?

A. There are people who ſee things longer than broad, and others the contrary. Some at a certain diſtance judge all objects to be greater than they are, and others leſs; and therefore I think it proper that children ſhould draw geometrical figures, becauſe in the plaineſt objects errors are moſt eaſily detected: therefore the maſter may, for inſtance, in a triangle, know in a moment, by means of the rule and compaſſes, the want of exactneſs in the eye of his pupil.

Q. The reaſon would be good if it were not contradicted by practice; ſince neither Raphael, the Caraccis, Domenichino, nor, finally, any great painter has ever been known to take this method, in order to perform the excellent works which they have made.

A. This is partly true, but ſtands in need of ſome explanation. Leonardo da Vinci, who has left us ſeveral rules of proportion of the human body, decides, that geometry is neceſſary to painters. Raphael's maſters taught him to draw with an extraordinary preciſion; therefore he could not help having at firſt a very ſervile and dry taſte, which he could only quit when he ſaw the ancient paintings, and the works of Michael Angelo, which he imitated becauſe he had formed to himſelf the moſt exact eye that is poſſible to be had. A genius, ſo pure, and correct, has not appeared in the world for more than two centuries and an half; therefore it would be preſumption to ſuppoſe, that any child whatever, who is brought up to painting, ſhould be endowed with ſo rare a talent: ſo that it is neceſſary to examine the

gifts which nature has imparted to him. The Caraccis followed the rules of proportion, which they found ſettled; and I finally admire in them ſeveral things more than extreme correctneſs.

Q. How? Was not Hannibal extremely correct?

A. Correctneſs is taken in different ſenſes; and in one of theſe he was correct, and owed it not ſo much to the exactneſs of his eye, as to the practice acquired by drawing much. Domenichino drew ſo often the group of Laocoon, that he knew it by heart. Nevertheleſs none of the painters, that are mentioned, have equalled the purity and preciſion of the antique: and as without being accuſed of a low fear we ought to undertake what others have done, I therefore propoſe to aſpire to the moſt perfect; and if when Raphael learnt correctneſs from his maſters, they had at the ſame time taught him to avoid their dry taſte, and to draw nature by geometrical figures, he would not have been obliged afterwards to change his manner. If Caracci and Domenichino had learnt painting, according to the method which I propoſe, we ſhould not have ſeen in their outlines ſo many falſe lines corrected, and in thoſe of the latter particularly, that cold and timid taſte which we ſee in them.

Q. But this geometrical ſtudy might ſometimes be prejudicial to elegance and eaſe.

A. Quite the contrary. Elegance conſiſts in the great variety of curved lines and angles, and it is geometry alone that can give the facility of performing theſe things with a ſure hand, and

with the qualities required. But I do not pretend that this ſtudy alone of geometrical figures can form great painters. I ſay that correctneſs being the moſt difficult part to be found in them, and that depending on exactneſs of ſight, it can be acquired in no manner ſo eaſily as by the ſtudy of geometry. To this is added, that a child by drawing for a month geometrical figures with accuracy, will learn more exactneſs than another who has been drawing in an academy for a year; and the firſt in ſix months time will know how to lay a figure well, and will have a good foundation for proceeding in the other parts of the art.

Q. What muſt be done after having drawn the ſaid geometrical figures?

A. Outlines from good drawings and pictures muſt be drawn, and the proportions of the human body muſt be ſtudied, in order to learn a good taſte of drawing, which the maſter muſt teach from the proportions of antique ſtatues; and then the attention muſt be redoubled, and the leaſt want of correctneſs muſt not be excuſed: when this is done, and a certain practice of drawing outlines with freedom has been acquired, then they muſt begin clare obſcure.

Q. Muſt the beginner be kept long in drawing outlines?

A. Till he has acquired a competent facility.

Q. When this is done, what muſt he ſtudy?

A. He muſt begin to ſhade, minding to make his drawings with the utmoſt purity; for if he acquires then this important qualification, it laſts alſo afterwards all his lifetime in painting. I

ſhall likewiſe obſerve, that when he draws in clare obſcure he muſt ſtudy anatomy, and perſpective, in order to prepare to draw afterwards from life.

Q. If on drawing geometrical figures it has been ſaid that ſix months after one can draw well an academical figure, why muſt one ſpend one's time in drawing deſigns and pictures, ſince it ſeems that it would be more expeditious to begin immediately to draw ſtatues?

A. It is not ſo; for in order to draw ſtatues well, one muſt know perſpective: and though I have ſaid that the beginner will in that ſtate know how to lay a figure, he muſt not, however, do it; for he would accuſtom himſelf to a cold imitation, without underſtanding foreſhortenings; or he would loſe that exactneſs of ſight he might have acquired.

Q. How muſt perſpective be ſtudied?

A. One muſt begin by ſtudying a little elementary geometry, and one ſhall then immediately learn to put all one's figures in perſpective.

Q. A little geometry ſeems to me inſufficient, ſince we ſee that thoſe who wiſh to teach perſpective fundamentally, cauſe not only the whole geometry, but alſo architecture, at leaſt the rules of the five orders, to be learnt, as they aſſert that one cannot lay a thing in due perſpective if one is not perfectly acquainted with geometry.

A. Thoſe who are of that opinion are not deceived. But I think that to form a painter, the prudent maſter muſt endeavour to make him know all the requiſites of his art in equal proportions,

portions, and not let him loſe his early time, which is the moſt precious, in things that are not of the firſt utility.

Q. Will the painter loſe his time then, if he ſtudies perſpective fundamentally?

A. No: but as this is a much eaſier thing than others which conſtitute the art of painting, it is not proper that the ſtudent ſhould employ too much time in it, before learning thoſe which are moſt neceſſary:—the more ſo, ſince the articles of perſpective which are moſt neceſſary for a painter, are only the plan, the ſquare in all its aſpects, the triangle, the round, the oval, and above all to conceive rightly the difference of the point of view, and the variety which the point of diſtance produces when taken far or near.

Q. How is anatomy to be ſtudied? Many ſay that it is not neceſſary, and that thoſe painters who have applied themſelves to it, have all fallen into a dry and graceleſs taſte.

A. Thoſe who ſay that anatomy is not neceſſary are groſsly miſtaken; for, without it, it is not poſſible to reaſon upon the parts of a naked figure. But in all, moderation and judgment muſt prevail, there being great difference between giving all to a part, and knowing how to employ it well; and rules muſt ſerve a painter only to uniform himſelf to nature, and make him underſtand it well.

Q. But anatomy is ſo long a ſtudy?

A. It is certainly not ſo long when rightly taught, that is to ſay, when the painter is taught no more than what is neceſſary to him; for a

phyſician and the ſurgeon muſt ſtudy it very differently, as they are to know all the interior play of the parts of man, and the painter wants only to know the effects they have on the ſurface.

SECTION I.

Painting is one of the three fine arts, which has for its object the imitation of truth, namely, the appearance of all viſible things. The materials neceſſary for this imitation are the three colours, red, yellow, and blue, to which are added black and white, which, without being properly colours, ſerve to repreſent light and darkneſs.

All the intermediate colours are compoſed of the three aforeſaid, which are the primitive, and with them art imitates all the appearances of nature upon a flat ſurface: as for inſtance, if through a glaſs we were to ſee a landſcape, a man, a horſe, or any other object whatſoever, and we were to put on the glaſs all the colours like thoſe which we ſee; when that operation was ended, we ſhould find that we had made a picture like the objects which we had firſt ſeen through the glaſs. By this means, though by a different proceſs, the painter proceeds in laying on a ſurface the colours with which he produces in the beholder the ſame effect as if he ſaw the real objects. From hence it proceeds, that any ſurface whatſoever, covered with colours, which gives us ideas either of forms or of figures, is

called painting, which as an art is only the manner of diſpoſing the colours ſo, that by their diſpoſition and modification they may excite in the ſpectator ideas of things which he either had previouſly ſeen, or are poſſible to be ſeen.

All objects which are perceived by the eye, are known little by little and gradually; therefore it has been neceſſary, that art ſhould likewiſe divide the imitation of objects in parts, and in different degrees; otherwiſe it would be as impoſſible to make works of merit, as to aſcend to the top of an ediſice without ſteps. At firſt ſight objects produce no other idea but that of their exiſtence. Their form makes us afterwards recollect that we have ſeen other things like them, which by common conſent are called man, horſes, &c. On purſuing the obſervation we ſhall find the manner in which that object is, and immediately after the general and particular proportions, and even its ſmalleſt parts. In the ſame manner the painter muſt begin by repreſenting to himſelf, a place where an action takes place; then in his imagination he muſt place the bodies that are to be there; and this is what anſwers to invention. He immediately will think on the manner of placing each object, as well reſpecting the whole as reſpecting the different parts or members; and this belongs to compoſition. Finally he will regulate the figure, or the particular form of each object, and that is what is called deſigning; and as thoſe forms cannot be perfectly expreſſed, owing to their being on a flat ſurface, deſigning is inſeparable from the art of ſhades and lights,

which is underſtood by clare obſcure. The forms being determined, then follow the colours of bodies, and the manner, and the management which may be more or leſs proper to expreſs objects, their eſſence and texture. All this is in general; but, in order to learn it, it muſt be ſtudied ſeparately with the utmoſt attention, for otherwiſe it will be as impoſſible to learn well as to erect a building without previouſly preparing the materials. I ſhall treat of each object in particular.

The word *Painting* may be taken in two ſenſes; either as an art, or as a production of art. In the ſecond ſenſe, all ſurfaces on which ſeveral colours have been laid for ſome end, or reaſon, are called paintings, or pictures, which will be more or leſs full of art, according to the reaſons with which they are made. Now, in the firſt ſenſe, as a productive art, it is one of thoſe arts whoſe ſcope is an imitation of truth; that is to ſay, all viſible objects, in the manner they preſent themſelves to our ſight. To attain this end, we make uſe of ſeveral means, which I ſhall ſpeak of, beginning by imitation.

Painting imitates the appearance of Nature by means of the five aforementioned colours, which ſerve for its materials; and they are White, Yellow, Red, Blue and Black. Although the firſt and the laſt are not, properly ſpeaking, colours; yet a painter muſt conſider them as ſuch, on account of the great utility he draws from them to repreſent lights and

ſhades; ſince in this art we have no other means to repreſent theſe two qualities, and even by theſe they are obtained but imperfectly, for thoſe reaſons which I ſhall explain hereafter. As to the other colours, ſuch as Orange, Purple, Violet and Green, they are only tints compoſed of two colours, as we ſee not only by experience from painting, but in the rainbow, and by the priſm, where the ſaid colours are not to be found in any other place but in the middle of their components, where the rays of the three primitive colours interſect. Green is between Blue and Yellow, Orange between Yellow and Red, and Purple or Violet between Red and Blue. Theſe colours are the materials which the painter employs to appear to him who looks at a painting; that on a ſurface there are ſeveral bodies ſeparated from each other, and which in part are enlightened, and in part deprieved of a direct light, and receive only a ſhare of that light which is intermixed with the maſs of air, or receive light by reflexion from other bodies, or totally deprived of light. This imitation depends on the uniformity which exiſts in forms, and their quantities and qualities with thoſe of nature: but as in this the parts of a body are infinite, the art of the painter conſiſts in knowing how far he can imitate. To find this, he muſt conſider the effect which all things make on him when he conſiders them wholly, and at that diſtance where his eyes can ſee all the body in queſtion; otherwiſe he will do ſome part well, but

never the whole. Beſides which, we muſt conſider, that in painting we have neither true light, nor true darkneſs, that is to ſay, a total privation of light; and we ought alſo to reflect, that a painted board is an equal ſuperfice which receives light on all its parts. As black in painting is not in itſelf more dark than any other black body which is enlightened, it requires a particular art to make black, in a painting, appear a privation of light. For the ſame reaſon, much ſkill is requiſite to make the ſhades appear as ſuch, and not as ſpots of a darker colour than that of the natural body. In the article upon colouring, I ſhall teach the manner of performing all theſe things.

The ſame, nay a greater difficulty is found in light, becauſe a painted board can be ſeen only in ſuch a poſition that the light which it receives be not reflected to the eyes of the beholder, otherwiſe the lights and ſhades would appear as in a glaſs, and the lights would appear extremely clear in a greater or leſſer degree according to the ſmoothneſs of the ſurface; and lights in painting, however white they may be, can only have the clearneſs of a half tint of a white body; conſequently, the painter that would imitate a body of a ſmooth or poliſhed ſurface to reflect light, ſhould employ much art, and then he will not obtain it to perfection. Therefore, I adviſe painters to avoid theſe caſes, and to proportion thoſe objects they want to paint to the power of art.

There are an infinite number of caſes in which it is impoſſible to paint a luminous body, and the lights of a white body. Finally, there is almoſt no object in nature which a painter can copy as he ſees, and if any were found who had the patience, like Mr. Denner of Hambourg, to make every wrinkle, and every hair with its ſhadow and in the apple of an eye to repreſent the whole window of the apartment, with the clouds which are in the air; yet, although all that ſhould be done, and even better than he did (who was unique, and admirable in this kind of painting,) yet ſuch a painting could never appear true, except with the condition of ſeeing it always at that diſtance in which the painter made it; the reaſon of which is, that on ſeeing a picture, there is always ſome circumſtance which undeceives us, and makes us know, that what is fictitious is not true. Let us ſuppoſe that the picture were perfect in all its parts; that it were placed in its principal point of view; that it had but one diſtance to be viewed from; that the light in which it was placed were juſt in the ſame manner it ought to be to produce the ſame lights and ſhades on the figures as if they were true; notwithſtanding all theſe conditions, we ſhould be undeceived by the flat ſurface, by the very ſtrokes of the pencil, and by the want of that air which ought to be between remote objects, lights and ſhades, and the lights would be weakened, as likewiſe the ſhades, by the interpoſition of the air, and the effects of the

great work of the painter would be deſtroyed. Hence it is inferred, that to make an ingenious imitation of nature (which is not ſervile, but judicious,) truth muſt be imitated only as it can exiſt, by giving it that proper diſpoſition of the object, and the idea that is wiſhed ſhould be conceived by the beholder; and that any form may preſerve its peculiarity, and characteriſtic quality in all the parts of the art; and that every object be repreſented in an intelligible manner, and diſtinguiſhed from any other whatſoever; finally, that whatever is natural be imitated in the moſt proper manner to give the beholder a clear idea of the painter's meaning.

Great painters have followed two paths to obtain theſe ends. Some have rejected thoſe parts which were not abſolutely neceſſary for their end, and thereby have made appear with greater advantage what they wiſhed ſhould be obſerved: others have ſought all the ſignificant parts, and have marked them with much preciſion, in order to give a very clear idea of what they wiſhed to expreſs. The prince of the firſt is Correggio, and of the ſeccond Raphael. Both, by their reſpective ſtyles, have raiſed painting to its utmoſt perfection; ſince, as I believe, the moſt one can attain is to make a painting appear as through a glaſs, more or leſs dim or dull. I omit many other reaſons, reſerving them for that place where I ſhall ſpeak of each part of painting.

II.

Of Deſign.

BY Deſign is chiefly underſtood outline, or the circumference of things with the proportion of their length, breadth, and form. We muſt not conſider which forms are the moſt graceful, and give them the preference, in order to make the work cauſe an agreeable effect; and this is to be obſerved not only in the figures, but likewiſe in the ſpace which remains between them and their members. The forms which are moſt agreeable are thoſe which are moſt varied; and the diſagreeable are thoſe which are repeated in themſelves, as the ſquare and the round: the firſt, becauſe they are compoſed of four lines which are parallel two by two; and the ſecond, becauſe they are the ſame thing on all ſides, and preſent no variety to the ſight, and conſequently, no gracefulneſs. The oval, or the ellipſis, is not ſo uniform. The triangle is the leaſt diſagreeable among all the regular figures, becauſe its angles are of an uneven number, and its lines form no parallels.

In painting, we muſt utterly avoid all repetitions of lines and forms, all parallels and angles of equal degrees, and above all, right angles, becauſe in theſe we have not even the liberty to vary their ſize; and in others, we have the power of making them greater or leſs, that is to ſay, more acute or more obtuſe; and in

other figures, we are more at liberty to vary their ſize.

For this purpoſe, it is neceſſary that a painter ſhould be well acquainted with perſpective; becauſe, by that means, he will be enabled to vary all his regular forms; as, for inſtance, a ſquare into a trapezium, or in an irregular form, he may enlarge, or contract a triangle; a circle may be changed into an ellipſis, and thus he will avoid all repetitions. Finally, if one member preſents itſelf in its geometrical aſpect, the correſponding one muſt be ſhortened to keep up a varied appearance.

No form muſt be uniform, and even right lines muſt be changed into waved, which will cauſe no prejudice to the principal forms, if one obſerves, that the parts of the circles touch at different points, diſtances, and heights, and the right line form no angle, but vary alternately in concave and convex lines. A line ſo drawn is the moſt proper to give grace and elegance to the out lines; for, without altering the height or elevation of a member, it can be made to appear lighter in a greater or leſs degree; for by making the convex lines greater than the concave, they will become heavy, and making them the contrary, they will appear light. Therefore a juſt proportion muſt be given to theſe two kinds of forms, as I ſhall explain more fully in the chapter on Gracefulneſs or Deſign.

In a naked body one cannot make angles, except when a muſcle, or one part is concealed

behind another; for in such a case, by a kind of intersection, it forms an angle, and then it is necessary to observe well where that muscle, or that part rises; in which many painters have erred through ignorance of anatomy. These intersections are made in different ways. They are made in members which are seen entirely when the obliquity of a muscle has its origin in the part which is not seen; and in the foreshortenings, for many times a muscle is interrupted when the fleshy part covers the concave which binds it to the tendons; and for the same reason there are so many intersections in the foreshortenings, as all the convex forms conceal or diminish the concave. On this account, prudent painters avoid foreshortenings in graceful objects as much as they can; and when they cannot possibly do without them, they put as few as possible, and only those which are indispensably necessary. In those of a harsh character, and of a strong expression, where an altered style can be adopted, it is employed with success; and the same thing happens in those cases when one member intersects another, and angles are formed; but then we must observe where the line intersects, for if the member which is concealed behind the other, crosses at the beginning of its convexity, it will be displeasing to the sight, since it will appear that they are incompatible, one making its appearance without, and the other within. If such a meeting of lines cannot possibly be avoided, it may be remedied by

covering that part with ſome drapery, or by making the interſection in the ſtraight part of the member, which we wiſh to conceal: and if neither that can ſucceed, we muſt endeavour to make it fall where the curve line is greateſt, that on the other ſide the ſame kind of line may be found.

I have warned the painter not to make any figures perfectly geometrical, and therefore he muſt obſerve, that when any regular form occurs, he muſt not end the lines in angles, but round off their ends; ſince, by that means, the ſight will have that variety of forms which conſtitutes gracefulneſs. If, on the contrary, a round form ſhould occur, he may vary it by making ſome planes, and waving the line. Finally, we muſt hold as a certain rule, that no figure muſt be made perfectly angular, nor perfectly round, as no object is more unpleaſant to the ſight of a painter.

Theſe obſervations muſt be made on the works of thoſe maſters who are moſt eminent for Deſigns, and particularly on thoſe who have ſhewn a good taſte in Deſign, ſuch as the Caraccis, and ſome of their pupils, who, though they might have had occaſion to repreſent; for inſtance, a ſtone cut according to all the nicety of art, yet they certainly would have made it with broken angles. In deſign is compriſed all that part of painting which ſerves to determine the form of bodies; and, although this part is inſeparable with lights and ſhades, yet it is particularly underſtood of forms, which are the ends,

and laſt parts which we ſee of bodies. This part is compoſed of two others which are principal, that is to ſay, of the knowledge of the proper form of a thing, and the manner of ſeeing it. The ſecond ſeems to belong to optics, which, in painting, is comprehended in perſpective, a part of optic; and the firſt, as to human bodies, and thoſe of all animals, depends on anatomy; and in other bodies, from the knowledge of their proper forms, it is impreſſed on the memory by means of geometry. We muſt however obſerve, that pictorial geometry, for the painter muſt not know the reaſons of the forms to make them with a free hand, and by the eye, as it would be to no purpoſe to know geometry as well as Euclid, if one cannot deſign one's figures without compaſſes and rule; and this is acquired only by a habit contracted by ſeeing with preciſion and exactneſs. This is the fundamental baſis of Deſign, without which the painter will never be able to do what he knows theoretically; for, as in painting we muſt expreſs the forms, which we ſee in nature, as they preſent themſelves to our ſight, and as the beauty of forms depends on that little more or leſs which determines and decides their character, ſo by a little more or leſs one gives or preſents a clear knowledge of the forms. Therefore, whoever wiſhes to excel in Deſign, muſt, in the firſt place, obſerve the form of the body he means to draw, and in the ſecond, the manner in which it preſents itſelf to our view. To the proper form of a body

belongs alſo the proportion of its parts, which is that analogy they have among themſelves, and is commonly called Proportion. Of this I ſhall make a ſeparate chapter when I come to ſpeak of the proportions of the human body; therefore, I ſhall only ſay for the preſent, that in every entire body there is a general character, that is to ſay, an entire body is compoſed of either ſquare, triangular, or round forms; and although theſe forms be varied in an infinite number of ways, yet they will always preſerve that character which nature has given them, and which diſtinguiſhes them. Therefore thoſe who wiſh to ſeek beauty in deſign, muſt conſider well the characteriſtic form of each body, and give a clear repreſentation of it in their work, without minding accidental minutiæ; nor yet omit any thing ever ſo ſmall, when it ſerves to the conſtruction of the body. When I ſay minutiæ, I mean accidental things; as for inſtance, if a tanned body had by accident a thick or round muſcle, as may happen by the frequent uſe of ſuch a part, or through the complexion, or ſome circumſtance of the health of the perſon, the painter muſt not imitate it, but on the contrary, he muſt ſuppoſe that the man is uniform in all his parts, in order that he may not interrupt the general intelligence which he means to give of the figure of a tanned man. The ſame thing happens with a ſtrong, light, fat, young, or old man. Whenever in a body of a determined character there is ſome part, although beautiful in the

extreme,) of a form and character different from the greater part of the other members which compoſe the whole, it would be a monſtruoſity to interrupt the general idea of the character of that body.

Beſides, it is neceſſary to be attentive not to change, upon any account, the character, form, or proportion, which nature has given to any body whatever, or any of its parts; therefore, for inſtance, a muſcle muſt never be reduced to a ſquare or round form, ſince this would be changing nature and her determinate laws, and departing from probability: one may, however, give ſuch a part or muſcle more or leſs length. In the ſame manner if Nature has made one thing large, and another ſmall, they muſt never be made equal, and much leis the great ſmall, or the ſmall great. What I ſay of the general idea, and the character of a whole figure, I mean alſo of the ſquare forms, or of others; but I do not pretend therefore that we muſt change the proper form of the muſcles, and of the parts, but if that muſcle is by its nature round, its facings muſt be made ſmall, or its ſquarings the more angular, as all the other muſcles are ſo, without however ceaſing to appear round in compariſon with the reſt, which are of another figure.

In what reſpects the forms, it is alſo neceſſary the painter ſhould conſider that ſcarce any bodies are perfectly angular, or perfectly round, and that the variations of theſe forms cauſe a certain effect in paintings which

gives an idea of motion, flexibility, and of life. Each line has within itſelf the property of expreſſing a quantity of the body which it circumſcribes; as, for inſtance, any ſtraight line gives an idea of extenſion, or hardneſs; the curve, on the contrary, gives an idea of flexibility; the elliptic, placed horizontally, repreſents tender and moiſt bodies; thoſe in the form of an S give an idea of life; and thus the other lines, according to the different manner in which they are employed, and the place they are in, have a different meaning.

Much might be ſaid if I wiſhed to ſpeak of all the caſes, in which a particular obſervation is requiſite in each form, and of all that occurs in painting; however, I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving, that foreſhortenings muſt be avoided, particularly in beautiful objects, which do not ſuffer that alteration of forms, which foreſhortening produces; for a member, or a part foreſhortened, is ſubject to a point of view; and if that is quitted, it appears falſe or deformed.

III.

Of Lights and Shades.

That part of painting which is called Clare Obſcure, or more properly the art of lights and ſhades, is of two kinds, like all the other parts of painting; that is to ſay, one neceſſary, and ſimply true, and the other probable, or ideal. However, before ſpeaking of the

particular rules of lights and ſhades, it will be neceſſary to make the following obſervations. I. If there were no light, all bodies would be dark. II. Air is a maſs intermixed with extraneous bodies. III. Light, in falling on a body, reaſcends, and produces what is called reflexion, or reverberation; and this happens more or leſs, according as the body is ſmooth or rough. IV. All convex bodies reflect the rays of light according to their being more or leſs curved, as if they were reflected from the centre of that form; and the concave unite them in the ſpot where the centre of their curve would be. V. On no ſmooth and flat body can light be ſeen, except where an angle is formed equal to the line of the viſual ray of the perſon who looks at the ſaid body. VI. In rugged and coarſe bodies, which have a rough and porous ſurface, each of their particles is nevertheleſs more or leſs ſhining, and their light ſeems more dilated, for the rays are reflected on all ſides of the ſurface, but on account of their ſmallneſs they are almoſt loſt in air, and ſo form an ample, but weak light.

This part of painting is that which gives it moſt brilliancy when well underſtood. This is what renders a form eaſier to be underſtood, for the outline is only a kind of particular ſection; and a globe without lights and ſhades cauſes the effect of a diſk.

After linear Perſpective, lights and ſhades is the part which contributes moſt to make bodies

appear raiſed, and of various and diſtinct forms. Aërial perſpective has alſo a ſhare in the parts of lights and ſhades; and here it is neceſſary to mind, that in nature there is ſcarce any perfect angle, and her angles are only ſmall curves, which end in two lines that widen themſelves. Therefore, the painter who underſtands rightly the art of managing lights and ſhades, muſt get rid of geometrical angles, which lead him to a great harſhneſs. Such angles can only ſuit ſome outlines that are very much enlightened; however, none muſt be made decided, nor with a tint that is truly luminous, but with a half tint, ſince it is impoſſible that the line which falls on the angle of a body, can reflect by an equal angle to our eyes from the laſt extremity of the outline; and if light were to produce this effect, we ſhould ſee the whole object dark, and a very weak light in the outline: this caſe muſt not be ſuppoſed, and if it were to be, it would not produce any pleaſure, for it would deſtroy the brightneſs of the object.

We muſt moreover conſider, that all bodies being in part, or in the ground of their ſurface ſmooth, they reflect a part of the rays, and tinge again the neareſt air with a light of their own colour. I have ſaid all this only with the intention of perſuading ſtudents that outlines ought to be ſoft and gentle, and that if we ſee ſome in nature which appear ſharp, it ariſes from the enlightened bodies being infinitely diſtinguiſhed from the body that is not enlightened, and that both are either true lights or real dark-

neſs; which does not happen in painting, as has been ſaid before.

If we conſider the light which is in the contour of a figure, comparing it with that which is in the centre ſtill more raiſed to our eyes, we ſhall always find two or three degrees difference. Therefore the painter muſt do the ſame, by putting a third colour in the contour to maintain the relief. Some eminent painters, in order to obtain at once both theſe effects, have made the juſt degradation in the principal body that is enlightened, and have given it for a ground an object that is dark and obſcure by nature. This has been done repeatedly by Correggio. Therefore, whoever wiſhes to produce an effect of true relief in paintings or drawings, muſt previouſly examine what ſtrength he can give to the form and the poſture of the body, which he propoſes to repreſent, and immediately he is to conſider what direction the ray of light takes relative to the horizontal line which his ſight forms with the object. This obſervation will ſerve him to underſtand the effects of light on true objects, as well as to imagine thoſe objects he does not ſee. He muſt then conſider how an object is to be placed, whether it be flat or round, that it may receive more light, and reflect it back to the eye under an equal angle. Thoſe conſiderations muſt be had in obſerving the plan and elevation of bodies.

The lights, or luminous bodies which we make uſe of in painting, are three: the Sun,

Fire, and Air. Painting often employs the laſt two ways; the one is called cloſe light, and the other open light. Cloſe light muſt be conſidered as if it were another new luminous body of the ſize of the window through which the light comes, and as if it were alſo at the ſame diſtance. This light is almoſt a reflected light; for, although the ſun is on the oppoſite ſide out of the window, yet there comes ſomething of his perfect light, and conſtantly; for which reaſon the painter muſt chooſe his light from the North. The open light of the air without ſun is likewiſe of two kinds: the one when the ſun is clouded, and its light pierces through, which produces a weak clearneſs, but however always comes from where the ſun is; the other when the ſky is ſerene, and objects that are in the ſhade receive light from the ambient air, and the light ſeems to fall vertically on them. If a very remote object keeps the ſun's rays from another, the light which it then gives is as if the weather were cloudy.

Of the light of the ſun itſelf, it is almoſt uſeleſs to ſpeak, it being impoſſible to imitate it well. I ſhall only ſay, that the ſun's light admits no other degradation than the poſition of the body which receives it. The light from fire follows the ſame rule of the cloſe light, its force being to be conſidered always according to its ſize; and the ſmaller the light is, the greater will its degradation be. The light of open air is the moſt unfavourable for a

painter, on account of all the body of the air being equally enlightened. Shadows are loſt when the luminous body is ſmall, that is to ſay, leſs than the enlightened, and the greateſt part of this will be deprived of light, and the ſhadow which it produces in other objects will keep widening as they go from the object which cauſes them. The ſhadow of thoſe bodies which receive light from a window greater than thoſe bodies, will become always narrower, and be loſt ſooner or latter according to the ſize of the light. The bodies which are in the open light without ſun, have hardly any ſhadows, and only cauſe a very ſmall privation of light to thoſe objects which are near them; for the whole air is full of a diſperſed light. The light of the ſun is of an equal force on all ſides, and ſhadows follow the direction of the body which produces them. It is alſo neceſſary to conſider, that ſhadows are never entirely deſtitute of light, and that they are dark only in compariſon to another greater light. The rays which come to our eyes by the reflection of an enlightened body, dazzle our eyes, ſo that they confound thoſe objects which are in a leſs light. If that leſſer degree of light, which we call ſhade in compariſon to the greater light, becomes univerſal, as when a cloud covers the ſun entirely from us, we then ſee the ſame bodies clear and diſtinct which ſeemed ſhaded, becauſe there is no longer that light which dazzled us. The ſame thing happens when we keep off the light with our hand in order

to see dark objects better, and when we approach bodies that are not much enlightened we distinguish them better, because less light is interposed between us and those bodies, and our sight is not dazzled thereby. From thence the painter must infer, that near objects are distinguishable also in shadows, and therefore he must not make them as dark as those shadows which are at a great distance, and which are lost in a colour mixed with light and darkness, almost blue, on account of the enlightened bodies which are in the air interposed between our eyes and the dark place. Finally, the aerial perspective must be observed, which has its rules as the linear in what respects the diminution of the force of lights and shades. Let us for instance suppose a course of squares, a palm each, placed in perspective, on the first a figure, and on the second and third likewise; I say, that if on account of the proximity to the point of distance the second row diminishes by a third of the size of the first, the third will not diminish by a fourth of the second, and the others the farther they are from the eyes of the beholder the less will they vary from each other. Therefore the same thing happens in aërial perspective; for, if from the first to the second figure there is no degree of difference, from the second to the third there will be less, and the difference will be always smaller, as we observe in mountains and towns seen at a distance. A house which is near, differs infinitely in the strength of *lights* and shades and size from

another like it a mile difference; but if we ſee a town fifteen miles off, a houſe which is a mile farther differs almoſt nothing from one like it in the town; and the ſame happens with two hills that are ſeen at a great diſtance. I do not think it neceſſary here to give a ſcientific demonſtration of it; experience, which ſhews the truth of it, being ſufficient. The ſame degradation takes place in light; for inſtance, from the firſt to the ſecond object there will be a degree of difference; from the ſecond to the third in equal diſtance there will be much leſs; and ſtill leſs from the fourth to the fifth. The degradation will be greater or leſs, according as the ſhining body is nearer, or further. If near, the degradation will be ſtrong, becauſe the firſt objects will receive a greater quantity of rays of light than the ſecond, and the others which follow, becauſe the lines of the rays become always more equal, and of a leſſer angle as they go from the point of view: and when ſome ſhining body is very far, like the ſun, then the rays are almoſt parallel, and differ ſo little in all the ſurface of the world enlightened at once, that the difference is imperceptible to our ſight.

In general, there are two cauſes by which the moſt intenſe lights loſe their force, and become extinct. The one is the diſtance from the ſhining body, and the other the diſtance from which we ſee objects. When theſe two circumſtances combine in an object, then the body which we want to repreſent remains

very weak of lights and ſhades; for if it is far from the light, and near our eyes, the general clearneſs will be very weak; but its face will be ſeen with preciſion and clearneſs, as our eyes being near, they ſee *preciſely* the point where that ſhining body is ſpread. But when an object is near the light, and far from our eyes, the general light will be ſtrong, but its ſtrength will be ſpread and confuſed in the maſs of clearneſs; for that light being as only a point in the diſtance, it becomes extremely ſmall, and is loſt in the air before it comes to our eyes. The ſame happens with ſhadows, ſince thoſe of bodies near our ſight muſt be lighter, and the bodies will appear darker; and in places where light can penetrate, the ſhadows will be ſtronger, and more decided. On the contrary, the general ſhadows of objects diſtant from us muſt be darker; but the ſtronger and ſmaller ſituations muſt be confuſed in the general ſhade, untill a quantity of air is interpoſed, which weakens the darkneſs of the ſhades, and finally the colour likewiſe.

We muſt alſo conſider that lights and ſhades conſtitute that part of painting which explains the forms and the means by which, on a flat and even ſurface, bodies appear as detached, and in relief. Bodies can have only three kinds of forms, being compoſed of ſurfaces, either right, curved, or of mixtilinear. The right can only be of one kind; but the curved may be concave, or convex, and the mixed are the moſt varied. If, therefore, the art of lights

and ſhades ſerves to explain the forms, it is neceſſary to conſider, that curves muſt have no angle, that is, no diverſity of degree of reflection. Therefore thoſe who ſeek to expreſs by lights and ſhades ſuch forms, muſt obſerve, that from the ſituation of the light to the half tint, and from this to ſhade, and from ſhade to reflexion, there muſt be no total diverſity of tints, but the degradation muſt precede imperceptibly more or leſs, according to the nature of the curve which it repreſents. Angular bodies, or thoſe compoſed of right lines, which is the ſame, ought to have their lights and ſhades of ſeparate tints like their form, whoſe ſurface changes the direction inſtantaneouſly. Mixed bodies muſt be alſo mixed with theſe kinds of lights and ſhades.

IV.

Of Colouring.

The art of colouring is that part which, in painting, ſerves not only to repreſent ſimply the univerſal appearance of coloured bodies, but alſo to make the beholder know their general and particular qualities; as for inſtance, if they are hard, moiſt, dry, or mixed with other qualities. The materials are the five before mentioned colours, white, yellow, red, blue, and black. The ſecondary colours, or firſt tints mixed from them, are orange, green, purple, grey, and brown; and each of theſe

colours is compoſed of two primary; but if a third be added, it loſes all its beauty.

Nature has given us two kinds of colours: the tranſparent dark, and the diaphanous light. We have beſides dark opaque colours, as lake, azure, ivory black, and others of the ſame kind; but theſe can never arrive at the opacity made with the tranſparent. The difference between a tranſparent and an opaque body is, that the rays of light enter and paſs through the tranſparent body, nor do they ſtop, or are they reflected on its ſurface, as happens in the opaque. A body of mixed parts opaque and diaphanous, receives the rays of light, but part of them remain on the ſurface, and part enter it and cover the whole body with a ſhare of light, which then cauſe in it ſeveral colours, according as repeated angles of light are formed. Where the ſurface is imperfectly enlightened, we perceive by its tranſparency thoſe internal parts from which light cannot be reflected to our eyes, and therefore it appears opaque: on the contrary, where the ſurface is diveſted of rays of light, we ſee through it that light which is ſpread in the body, and this effect encreaſes the livelineſs of the colour.

The ſame thing happens in painting. When a clear colour is but lightly laid on a dark, it dims it, and makes it grey: on the contrary, a dark colour laid on a light encreaſes its luſtre. For the preceding reaſons a ſemidiaphanous body never appears of a pure colour in the enlighted part, but in that where the rays of

light have penetrated it, without leaving the ſurface enlightened. Hence we muſt obſerve, that in order to repreſent delicate complexions, livid tints muſt be freely employed, and in a figure of ſuch a complexion, pure tints muſt be employed only in thoſe parts where the ſkin is drawn over the bones, for thoſe bodies being in themſelves white, and the ſkin tranſparent, the light paſſes through, and is received by the body which is under. When the light is very ſtrong in thoſe places where under the ſkin there is ſome ſolid fat, it alſo makes nearly a pure tint; inclining more or leſs to green, according as that fat is moiſter in thoſe places covered by the white ſkin. In parts that are moiſt, the tint takes a liuiſh caſt; the ſame thing happens when the blood is covered by a white ſkin ſufficiently thick, to prevent the light from paſſing in ſuch a quantity as to make the blood appear red, for then it performs the office of a black body; and the white which paſſes over it, not being perfectly compact, appears blue. When the blood is only covered by a tranſparent pellicle, it appears red in the ſurface, and when the ſkin is interſected by very ſmall veins in its ſurface, or it paſſes over moiſt places, it occaſions a purple tint.

By all I have ſaid till now, the reaſons of the different tints which are ſeen on the human body may be accounted for, and one may ſee how much one ought to obſerve this variety, which diſcovers the proper quality of each part.

We muſt therefore obſerve in general, that when the upper ſurface is clearer by its nature than the body which is under it, it always appears as if mixed with dark particles, that is to ſay, black: on the contrary, if the ſurface is by its nature of a tint darker than the body under it, then the tints become purer, and more tranſparent than if it had under a body equal in darkneſs. Wherever fleſh is covered by a thick ſkin, it muſt be leſs varied, as being a thicker and more tranſparent body to cover perfectly the other which is under.

In the chapter on lights and ſhades, I promiſed to teach the manner of making ſhadows appear more true than they generally are; therefore, I ſhall here begin to ſpeak with the ſame order of nature, on the colours of ſhining bodies. What light is in itſelf, is one among the many things which remain concealed behind that veil which keeps from the minds of all men the knowledge of the firſt principles. We ſhall therefore content ourſelves with ſpeaking of its effects, as far as we can comprehend them by experience. It is probable, that light has no colour whatever; but as on coming to us it croſſes intermediate bodies, it acquires a colour, or is tinged by the refraction it makes from one body to another untill it reaches our ſight. If the matter through which it paſſes, or which ſurrounds it, or is mixed with it, be thin, uniform, and in ſmall quantity, the light is clearer and leſs tinged, and receives more plentifully the firſt degree

of colours, which is yellow, and plentifully alſo the ſecond degree of colours, which is orange; then it admits red; finally, it receives blue, and is loſt in darkneſs. From theſe cauſes ariſe the different colours of ſhining bodies. Theſe, whether natural or artificial, give their colour to the bodies they ſhine upon; and the more times the rays of the ſaid light are reflected and refracted, the more they augment their colours. That which receives light firſt is air, and muſt therefore be neceſſarily tinged with its colour; and the thicker the air is, the more it will be tinged. If the painter obſerves this well, he will avail himſelf of it much for the *accord* of the picture; ſince it gives him an opportunity of ſuppoſing a univerſal tint, which is mixed with all the colours, more or leſs, according to the quantity which he wiſhes to ſuppoſe of this tinged air interpoſed between its objects. He muſt moreover conſider, that re-reflection not only brings with it the colour of the body firſt enlightened, but alſo part of the colour of the light; and this is alſo an advantage in compoſing the picture, and is very uſeful for the diſpoſition of the colours of the drapery of which we ſhall ſpeak hereafter.

There are two reaſons for which we ſee the colour of a body, and without ſtopping to examine whether bodies are coloured by nature, or by the forms on which the rays of light make ſuch an apperance, the painter muſt conſider each body as if it had in itſelf that colour we ſee in it. The reaſon which renders it vi-

ſible to us is, becauſe the body receives the light; that is to ſay, being placed ſo, that the rays of light ſtrike its ſurface; the more perpendicularly they fall, the more light they receive; and becauſe the body is placed ſo that the light, which falls upon it, may reflect with an equal angle to our ſight. The body which receives the light forms a ſhining mirror; and on the ſpot where we ſee the light ſtronger, more rays are collected, and are tinged with a colour like that of the ſhining body. If the body which receives the light be diaphanous, and of a ſmooth ſurface, we ſhould ſee the light only on a point; but if it be rough and porous, we ſee the light ſpread for the reaſons given in the chapter on lights and ſhades. In that poroſity, light is reflected from one particle to another, and therefore we ſee its own colour more than that of the light. Where the ray falls in the ſmalleſt angle on the object, part of the colour of the body is loſt, and a tint is formed and compoſed of darkneſs and the colour of the body. Finally, in thoſe places where the light paſſes totally, becauſe it cannot touch them, it would leave the body quite black if there were no light ſcattered in the air, and if the body did not receive any other reflected light. This laſt light will be tinged either of the colour of the ſhining body, or of the body which cauſes the reflexion mixed with its own colour, and with that of the light. The deepeſt ſhades ought to be of the colour of the tint of the general harmony,

becauſe it is ſuppoſed that the air is already tinged with this; and the ſame is underſtood of all the drapery, and of all the other bodies. Therefore thoſe who wiſh to paint the lights of bodies rightly as they are, and particularly fleſh, muſt employ opaque colours, and impaſte well their painting, that it may become a body fit to receive the light, and reflect it abundantly to the eyes.

I have placed the colours in the order which they ariſe from the light, beginning by white, yellow, red, and blue, and even to black. Theſe matters, therefore, which are in their nature apt to receive the appearance of white, or of yellow, ought neceſſarily to have in themſelves a portion of light, or that they be very apt to reflect the rays of light to our ſight; and this cannot happen but by means of a quantity of particles thick, compoſed, heterogeneous, without following interſtices, and deprived by theſe reaſons of every kind of tranſparancy; from whence we ſee that a glaſs, which is in its nature uniform, is for that reaſon tranſparent; but if it be pounded and reduced to very fine powder, it is no longer tranſparent, and appears white, until a body actually diaphanous, ſuch as oil, is mixed with it, becauſe then it acquires again part of its tranſparency, on account of the oily ſubſtance which is introduced, and perfectly inſinuates itſelf among its particles, being uniform and tranſparent. This is, in general, the reaſon why oil gives a certain tranſparency to

colours, becauſe being of a humid ſubſtance, which inſinuates and thickens without being exhaled, it leaves it particles among the colours.

A body is diaphanous when the light paſſes it without remaining on the ſurface. If a colour is of a very porous nature, and of ſmall particles, ſo that many particles enter into every particle of its matter, this then is called a rich colour; and for that reaſon it requires a great quantity of theſe colours to produce the ſame effect which few of thoſe colours give which we call body colours, that are in their nature more compoſed, or denſe; from whence one does not mix ſo much oil with theſe as with the others, and the light which ſtrikes upon ſuch bodies is reflected to our ſight. By that is clearly inferred in what conſiſts the tranſparency of colours, and that to paint very oily will only be prejudicial; becauſe oils, after ſome time, are exhaled and diſſected, and finally ſhow the colours that are under, and which were covered by the denſity of the oil; and ſo much the more if in beginning of a painting one makes uſe of light and rich colours: and this has deſtroyed many beautiful paintings, as one might ſee in many of the Venetian ſchool, the firſt who introduced very oily painting, and particularly Tintoretto. By theſe ſame means many beautiful paintings of the Carraccis have been deſtroyed; and for that reaſon, I adviſe painters to uſe canvaſs prepared with very clear colours thus to avoid their paintings turning dark. Thus we ſee that

Titian, Rubens, and Vandyke did, who almoſt always painted very lightly, availing however of clear preparations; ſo that their paintings are well conſerved, and perhaps more lucid than they were when freſh painted.

It is neceſſary, therefore, to impaſte well with colours not very oily, and clearly placed, following the proper direction of each form of all the work the firſt or ſecond time that one goes over the painting; becauſe, when one ſketches it is the time when one has to think of the principal maſſes, and *tout enſemble* of a work; and the ſecond time one might place more particular attention to each part, obſerving notwithſtanding to maintain the work always from the beginning with light, ſoft, and harmonious tints; that is to ſay, of cinder colour, to be able then to increaſe, reinforce, and revive at times and places the colours which one would wiſh to make moſt lucid. Proceeding the contrary way, it is eaſy to fall into a crude ſtyle. At the end of a work one might uſe rich colours to make ſome light retouches, and to veil the ſhade of objects neareſt the ſight; and this will contribute very much alſo to make the ſhade appear true, by the reaſon that tranſparent colours let the rays of light paſs in a manner that they reſt not upon the ſurface to reflect themſelves to our ſight, ſo that it does not appear illuminated, but truly ſhady, although very light. In this manner one might diſtinguiſh two ſhades of different diſtance, although they be of the ſame degree

of obſcurity, by placing neareſt to our ſight rich and tranſparent colours, and moſt remote opaque colours, which, in receiving the light, have the effect of intermediate air. It is neceſſary alſo to obſerve, not to make all bodies of rich colours, becauſe thoſe which are in Nature opaque, ought not to be painted rich.

It now remains to ſpeak of each colour in particular; that is, of the ſituation it receives by means of clare obſcure. I would therefore begin by white. White in the light remains white, becauſe as that tinges the object of white drapery, thus it will alſo tinge the white of a painting. The ſecond tint ought to be of a colour rather blue, to make the light appear tinged by the luminuous body. In the third tint one ought to mix a grey, ſomething tinted with the colour of the general harmony, obſcuring it proportionably in the ſhade; but one ought to make the reflexions of the colour of duplicated light. One ſhould therefore endeavour to avoid the occaſions of making the ſhades of a white cloth more obſcure than another whoſe colours are in their nature more obſcure. This is in general a rule; for there are ſometimes occaſions when it is inevitable. That which I ſay of a white cloth is to be underſtood alſo of white fleſh, in which it is neceſſary beſides to maintain the ſhade clear and lucid; and ſince white excludes equally the three colours, yellow, red, and blue, their ſhades ought to preſerve the ſame character, without inclining to any of the aforſaid colours,

unleſs it be for evident reaſons of ſome reflection. This is a general rule for all bodies which are painted, and which ought always to preſerve in the ſhade the ſame characters which they have in the light.

Yellow is the moſt clear colour after white. Perfect yellow is that which neither partakes of green or of golden colour. This colour, as ſoon as it loſes part of its light, loſes alſo its beauty, becauſe it is in itſelf lucid; to the contrary, in the reflections of its proper colour it becomes very lively, becauſe it receives the light voluntarily. and reflects it ſtrongly, ſince light always inclines to that colour, and augments in its reflections. Red is the moſt lively colour, and enters in all colours. The moſt perfect is that which is at an equal diſtance from the golden and violet. This colour is eaſily corrupted in lights and ſhades, but if it be mixed with yellow light, it eaſily receives it. This is the colour which makes moſt brilliancy, and moſt ſtrongly by day; but by night (I ſhall preſently give my reaſons) its ſhades become very dark, and receive with difficulty the reflections of other colours.

Blue is the third colour, and almoſt the laſt degree of light, becauſe it approaches darkneſs. Its clears generally come ſpotted by the colour of light. The reflections of its proper matter, are more beautiful than its clears, becauſe they receive grace from that little yellow of light. Its ſhades are more powerful, but are eaſily ſtained, and voluntarily receive the reflections

of other colours, but is not eaſily reflected to other bodies, if the light be not very lively. Black, in painting, repreſents darkneſs; but when it receives light it is eaſily tinged with the colour of light, and in the ſame ſhade quickly receives the reflections of other colours.

V.

Of Harmony.

The uſe of the aforeſaid colours belongs to that part of painting which is generally, although, according to my opinion, improperly called Harmony. Harmony appertains to thoſe things which have meaſure, be it of time, quantity, extenſion, or any other dimenſion, that can produce a correſpondence of one part with another *. To find then harmony in colours, it would be neceſſary to determine and give a number to each colour; which thing would be very abſtruſe, and almoſt impoſſible; becauſe, ſuppoſing that one would wiſh to number the degrees of the angles of refraction that the rays of light form in the priſm, it

* Without pretending to oppoſe this opinion of Mengs, I believe there is true harmony in colours. A ray of light can cauſe in our optic nerve a ſtrong or a weak ſenſation, and another ray can at the ſame time produce another ſenſation which temperates and moderates the firſt, ſo that either of theſe two ſenſations will be ſometimes in itſelf alone diſagreeable, by vibrating our organs more or leſs than is neceſſary, yet will have a good effect together, the one correcting the exceſs and defects of the other; as two ſounds oppoſed in a certain proportion cauſe in the ear that grateful thing which is called *Harmony*.

would be an immenſe ſtudy, and at the ſame time it would alienate from a painting, and be uſeleſs to painters. A painter therefore ought to conſider that that which we call harmony is not properly ſerving of this metaphor, to denominate in our art that which in Italian one calls *accordo*, which produces in painting the ſame effect of harmony in muſic. Suppoſing that harmony has that effect in muſic which is commonly attributed to it, the ſweetneſs and acuteneſs of colours will depend upon the natural effect which they occaſion to our ſight, or in the optic nerves. The moſt clear colours have more force than the moſt obſcure, becauſe their luminous rays, ſtriking the viſual nerves, cauſe in part the ſame effect of a direct light, by filling all the internal of the eye with light, occaſioning by much force a painful ſenſation to the eye. Obſcure colours have not this effect, becauſe they do not reflect all the rays of light with the ſame force. Clear colours being then the moſt apt to give ſenſations to our eyes, they ought to be employed where it is required that the eye of the ſpectator fixes itſelf, and may obſerve and feel that that is the part which the painter has wiſhed to indicate as the moſt principal and noble. If the ſenſation ought to be ſoft, as in graceful ſubjects, it is neceſſary to keep the ſight of the ſpectator as long as one can in that ſenſation, and that he might loſe it by degrees; that is, that from the clear colours it ſhould paſs to the half tint, and not to the obſcure, and from thence to the

obſcure, and gradually to the moſt obſcure, without, however, ever rapidly paſſing from the obſcure to the very obſcure. To the contrary, if the ſubject be of a harſh nature, ſuch ought to be alſo the choice of the effects of the painting, operating in a contrary manner to the antecedent.

Pure and brilliant colours, which have more force than dead colours, ought to be employed in the moſt noble part of a painting, and uſed in greater or leſs quantity, according as the ſubject is required to be lively, ſoft, or melancholy. Every colour can be temperated by white and black, putting them in a manner which leaves few parts illuminated, becauſe in ſhade every colour degenerates and becomes dark. Red always remains harſh when it is uſed pure; unleſs in painting velvet of a rich colour, which mitigates its crudeneſs, and cauſes the rays of light not to reflect with ſo much force to the eye. It is likewiſe neceſſary that a painter ſhould obſerve of what nature is the colour of the general harmony; becauſe ſuppoſing it be reddiſh, he ſhould employ a red colour in the figures of the ſecond and third ſtage; and he will be able to place blue in the ſituation neareſt to the eye, and to proceed in the reſt with the ſame reaſonings, in caſe the general tints be different. It is very ſeldom however that red makes the general harmony, becauſe that is the colour which moſt reflects upon all the reſt. Of mixed colours, the gilded is the moſt harſh, being compoſed of

one of the moſt clear colours, and another of the moſt pure. Green is the moſt pleaſing, being compoſed of the moſt clear colour and the moſt obſcure, from whence it moves the the nerves of the eye, without fatiguing them. The violet is the moſt powerful of mixed colours, becauſe it is compoſed of the moſt pure and moſt dark, and for that reaſon cauſes a lugubrious ſenſation.

From what I have ſaid until now, one might perceive with facility the manner of varying colours, and of employing them with reaſon. Not to be more tedious, I ſhall omit other things, and only ſay that to felicitate the mode of regulating the equilibrium of colours in a painting according to the character that one would wiſh to give, one might conſider what I have ſaid from the beginning of the five kinds of materials which we have to expreſs all the objects that nature preſents, which are the five colours. Among theſe, two are lucid, two obſcure, and one in the medium, which I have called the moſt pure, becauſe it does not appertain either to light or darkneſs, but receives and reflects equally the one and the other. The painter avails of theſe materials, and employs more or leſs the one and the other to expreſs diſtinct characters, by different ſenſations which they produce in our ſight. If a painter finiſhes a painting of only ſimple white and black, it will remain a lifeleſs piece, becauſe it will be uniform; as white and black exclude every other colour; one in light, and the other in

darkneſs; but if he avails himſelf of theſe two proportionably, according to the idea which he would wiſh to render comprehenſible, by adopting the moſt black, or the moſt white, and the half tint, he will cauſe, notwithſtanding the uniformity of the character of theſe two colours, a varied ſenſation. Approaching the two extremes, it will be powerful and harſh: placing between the one and the other a great interval of half tint it will be more ſoft; and placing always each degree by the ſide of that which goes next, and by making it viſible only as much as is ſufficient to diſtinguiſh objects, ſuch a work will become very ſoft. Separating the clears in a maſs from the other clears, and the obſcures form the other obſcures, it will remain majeſtic and grand, and finally adapting thus, and mixing infinitely theſe means, it will cauſe a lively, dead, ſoft, harſh, tender, or whatever other ſenſation one would wiſh the ſpectators to feel. If to theſe, colours be added with the ſame reaſonings, one ſhall be able infinitely to augment with them the ſignifications and ſentiments which one would wiſh to produce; but it is neceſſary that the painter has care not to repeat many times the ſame lights and ſhades in force and greatneſs, and to endeavour to avoid the extremes, attending always to truth, and veriſimilitude; remembering always that clare obſcure is the baſis of that part of painting which is commonly called harmony, and that colours are but the tones which characteriſe the ſpecies of bodies; and

for that one ought to employ them with uniform reaſon to the general character, and clare obſcure.

In the uſe of colours, it is likewiſe neceſſary to obſerve their equilibrium, to find the mode of employing them with grace, and of accompanying them well. Colours, properly ſpeaking, are three; yellow, red, and blue, and theſe ſhould never be uſed alone in a work, and if it occurs to employ any one that is pure, one ſhould ſeek the manner of placing with it another mixed of two; as for example, if one employs pure yellow, one ſhould accompany it by the violet, becauſe this is compoſed of red and blue mixed together: and if one uſes pure red, one ſhould add for the ſame reaſon green, which is a mixture of blue and yellow: but the union of yellow and red which form the third mixture is difficult to employ well, becauſe they are too lively, by reaſons aforeſaid; from whence it is neceſſary to add to them, or accompany them by blue. Theſe colours employed in the aforeſaid mode in greater or leſſer quantity, will ſerve to give the character to the thing one would wiſh to repreſent; but one ſhould always obſerve, to uſe in a painting very few pure colours, and thoſe ſufficiently lively. One might accord all colours to white and black. White takes from their harſhneſs, and renders them tender; and black deadens them, and ofuſcates them. Thoſe compoſed of two of the primitive coloures one might ſoften and weaken with a little of the third primitive co-

lour. That which I have ſaid, ſerves not only in making the drapery, but alſo in the fleſh, and the fields, beginning by regulating oneſelf always according to the principal parts, which one has to accord to all the others.

VI.

Continuation of harmony and colouring.

Harmony, in a painting, is that effect which pleaſes the eye, the ſame as harmony in muſic pleaſes the ear.

In the antecedent paragraph, I have ſpoken of five colours, differing much from the principles of Newton, who aſſigns ſeven, becauſe I have thought it more convenient to ſpeak according to the reaſons I have acquired from the experience and practice of my profeſſion; and by that I ſay, that the principle colours are three, yellow, red, and blue. The colour of Aurora, or the gilded colour, is compoſed of yellow, and of red; the violet, of porpery, red and blue; and the green of yellow and blue; from whence I conclude that theſe are tints, and not colours.

White, and black, are neceſſary to make the three colours more clear, or more obſcure; becauſe otherwiſe they would not be ſufficient to compoſe the variety which is neceſſary in a great work of painting; as one could not play a Sonata on the harpſicord in one ſole octave. White and black ſerve therefore to make the harmony more pleaſing or more grave. To obtain the direct harmony of a painting, it is neceſſary that the painter makes it in ſuch a

manner that there might be an equal quantity of all the colours, as well of the ſimple as the compoſed; and all the difficulty of compoſing a work of grand and beautiful taſte conſiſts in knowing how to find the ſituations where to place the ſaid colours.

One has to regulate the general harmony of a painting always according to the general tint which the light gives it. If, for example, it be illuminated by the light of the ſun, it is neceſſary to maintain the harmony with the tone of the light, which is yellow, becauſe that will tinge with its colour all the things illuminated by its direct light, and the things reflective will be illuminated by the bodies which receive the light from the firſt luminous body; and its colour is no longer ſimple, becauſe the interpoſed air is already tinged with the firſt light. In the ſame manner things which diminiſh by degradation, and are loſt in the air, one loſes in the ſame tone, becauſe all the atoms of the interpoſed air are tinged with the ſame colour. Shade partakes of the ſame tint, for two reaſons: the firſt, becauſe all ſhade is reflective, otherwiſe it would be perfectly dark; that is to ſay, pure black, and without colour; and the ſecond, becauſe, if that could happen, it would be neceſſary that this darkneſs ſhould partake more or leſs of the general tone, becauſe the air which paſſes over, or to ſay better, between the eye and the object which one ſees, will make a kind of veil to the tone of the general harmony. In the ſame

manner, when a painting has to repreſent illuminated objects of a day without ſun, or to give the light of the pure air of ſome window ſituated towards the weſt, the harmony will be blue; and one ought to obſerve the ſame rule aforeſaid; and thus one has to proceed with the other lights, being either of the eaſt or weſt, &c. In all harmony, one ought to obſerve particularly thoſe colours which are moſt oppoſite to the tone of the harmony, and to place ſuch colours in the foreground, in order that they may appear thus more advanced, and more ſeparated; but by that is underſtood in uniting them with others by the ſame gradation as I have ſaid before; and thus the colour which will moſt accord with the general harmony, ought to be placed in the laſt ſtage, becauſe by itſelf, it will be loſt in the totality.

For this diſpoſition, it is neceſſary that the painter ſhould make a particular ſtudy of the dignity and quality of colours; from whence it will be underſtood, that when, for example, I ſay that yellow is a colour in its nature luminous, it is a reaſon for placing it where one would wiſh the light to ſhine, according to the rules which I ſhall give in the following paragraph. The obſcure colours are more proper than the light to be put in the foreground, becauſe air illuminates all dark colours, and for the ſame reaſon it might be underſtood that the painter had ſuppoſed little air between the eye and the object repreſented; this one cannot demonſtrate with ſo much evidence in clear

things, becauſe all the clare which one makes in a painting, will always appear weak in compariſon to natural light; and for that reaſon able artiſts have always made in the foreground of their paintings ſome obſcure maſs in the firſt ſtage.

Red is the moſt lively colour, but at the ſame time, it is the leaſt fine; becauſe by its nature it has no connection either with light or darkneſs: it admits however of the one and the other, loſing its purity as I have ſaid above. It is neceſſary to place it where one would wiſh to make the parts moſt brilliant, and moſt advanced, becauſe, from its nature one cannot place it much behind, without mixing it with the violet and gilded colour. If one would wiſh to place it in a luminous part of the painting, one ſhould do it without mixing it with white, otherwiſe it will always remain opaque, red, and ordinary.

Blue is a colour in its nature opaque, and one has to place it in an obſcure ſituation of the compoſition; and then it is proper to guard it by mixing it with white, which would always produce a colour of air, and which, in place of advancing, would reſtrain it, and deſtroy the force of its quality.

For the ſame reaſon one might employ the golden colour in luminous and advanced ſituations.

Green is the moſt ſoft colour, becauſe it is compoſed of a luminous and a dark colour, and for that reaſon it forms a very grateful half

tint. The two extremes, that is, white and black ſhould be employed, the one and the other in the ſame manner, becauſe they deſtroy all colours, not having any colour natural to themſelves, and for that reaſon they might ſerve the judicious artiſt to combine the moſt contrary colours. One might adduce many examples upon that, but I ſhall chooſe only two of the moſt ſignificant. Rembrant has given to ſhade the moſt incompatible colours, leaving only one place illuminated with theſe colours, ſeparating the one from the other; and when the compoſition obliged him to bring them near, he illuminated artificially the one, and obſcured the other; becauſe, if he had placed them conjunctively, he would not have repreſented that light and ſhade according to the rules of clare obſcure. Barroccio, to the contrary, has given to his paintings an agreeable harmony, by illuminating all the colours with white, which took from them all their vigor; and by theſe means his paintings had a very raiſed clare obſcure. Finally, to give an idea of the taſte of theſe two painters, I ſay, that Rembrant has painted all his ſubjects as if he had ſeen them in a cave, where only enters a little ray of the ſun to enliven his harmony; and without giving more light than was neceſſary to diſtinguiſh one colour from another. Barroccio, to the contrary, appears to have ſeen his hiſtory in the air and the clouds, where, between the light and reflections, he left ſcarcely any ſhade, and by the abundance of the clare

obſcure he formed only a reſplendant painting.

According to this, I believe the judicious painter ought to employ theſe two different taſtes, each according to its place; but between the two extremes, it appears to me, that Rembrant ſurpaſſes Barroccio; becauſe one might find his taſte in nature, and that of Barroccio is only in imagination; and whatſoever thing one feigns, ſhould be formed in truth; becauſe, as Horace ſays,

Fieta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris.

I have ſaid, that with three colours one forms all tints. Pure colours are more worthy, and of more vigour than compoſed colours; and for that reaſon it is neceſſary to place them in a ſituation that one would wiſh to make moſt viſible, and moſt conſpicuous in a work, and to have care not to put them in the ground of a painting, or in a group. Two pure colours never agree well together; becauſe, as every beauty is nothing more than a hidden variety, of courſe, in two pure colours it requires a third to unite them. Likewiſe three ſimple colours will never have a pleaſing effect, but will, notwithſtanding, be leſs diſagreeable than two only. This is to be underſtood in general of colours that have the ſame degree of force and purity; becauſe, as I have ſaid before, making one thing all clear, and another all obſcure with white and black, will form a clare obſcure, but not harmony.

It is therefore neceſſary to unite colours well, and to obſerve, that of three colours, two ſhould be mixed to make the compoſition, and the third ſhould be left pure: by this method it will have union and variety. If it were neceſſary to employ two only, the third ſhould be mixed with the two. For example, the violet and the yellow will be always well united if one changes the violet with the blue. If one puts a deep roſe colour much charged with yellow, it will make a greeniſh colour. The roſe and the green united together will go pretty well. One may alſo employ blue and the golden colours; but with the remembrance that the roſe colour and yellow are too lively, in compariſon to the blue, which is almoſt obſcure; from whence it is neceſſary to deaden the livelineſs of the golden colour, to equilibriate the ſhade of the blue. For that reaſon blue, which partakes of green and cinaber that make a kind of aurora, go very well together; and by this rule one might alter ſoftly all colours, in a manner that may appear neither crude or harſh. In this rule is not to be comprehended only the drapery, and the other things tinted, but alſo the ground, fields, and the fleſh.

I recommend painters always to decide and complete the principal things before the others, and to remember that rules ſerve to explain the beautiful of nature, and not the contrary. A painter ſhould read and ſtudy well the hiſtory of the ſubject he would repreſent,

to know what light, what time, what day, and what perſonages he has to put in his ſcene, and in what age is the event; becauſe it would be very improper to paint a king in old clothes, or of mixid colours, after the manner of an harlequin; and it would be equally improper to paint a girl in brown clothes, or a boy with ſtrong colours, or a hero in roſy colours; or the ſoldiers flogging Chriſt in the uniform of French ſoldiers, and in hats after the Pruſſian mode; or a philoſopher with clothes of ſparkling and lively ſtuff, and of colours ſoft and tranſparant. Finally, it would be improper to paint a council or a feaſt of the Gods by imitating the colouring of Rembrant; as it would be abſurd to repreſent Eneas in Hell after the taſte of Barroccio: becauſe a melancholy ſubject ought to cauſe ſadneſs in him who views it, and of courſe it ought not to be compoſed of lively and cheerful colours. In ſubjects oppoſite to theſe, one ought to uſe ſimple and obſcure colours, and the light ought not to appear of a cheerful day, or of a pleaſing harmony; the clares ought to be concentured in one place only, nor ought to be complicated or diſperſed, as I ſhall explain elſewhere.

VII.

Of Compoſition.

Compoſition requires many things. Firſt, it is of advantage that the painter knows how to imagine well the hiſtory, after having read it many times until he has learnt it by heart. Nor

ought he to content himſelf with only choſen paſſages, but he ought to ſtudy the entire hiſtory, in order to know the characters of all the perſons which he has repreſented; this he cannot know without examining all their lives to judge with what view the action was done which is to be repreſented; becauſe a bad man might do a good action; but the painter ought notwithſtanding to make appear his character, be it in the figure, or countenance of the perſon, ſhowing the reaſons which operated him. It is neceſſary alſo to refer to the time, place, and cuſtoms of the people that are repreſented, and to give them the proper dreſſes of the nation and age in which they lived; and in caſe he cannot find monuments in books to make it known to him, he ſhould endeavour to know the nations from whom they have taken their cuſtoms, laws, and arms; or at leaſt the nations remote or near, from whence they have drawn their cuſtoms, ſuch as the Greeks from the Egyptians, or the Romans from the Greeks, &c; and for that reaſon, one has to read authors who treat of their principal paſſions, to form a true idea of the perſons. One might alſo on ſome occaſions draw uſeful concluſions from preſent cuſtoms; becauſe in general all nations agree in the foundation of human nature, and confronting preſent cuſtoms with thoſe of the ancients we find they ſeldom differ entirely. It is likewiſe neceſſary to denote the country by the trees, climate, rivers, ſeas, or by the edifices of its architecture, or by its particular taſte in the

arts; becauſe it would be an extravagance to put the Apollo of Belvedere in an edifice of Babylon, or a modern figure in a martyrdom of a ſaint a thouſand years ago.

It is alſo neceſſary to think of the particular ſituation, and that the light of the place agrees with the ſubject, and to make the furniture and interior architecture which is proper to the ſame ſubject, and to conſider generally that the world has not been entirely the ſame in the time of Cain and Enoch, as it is at preſent; and that then they did not build of the compoſed order, and that ornaments and luxuries were not then in uſe; and finally, one has to know in what age the arts and ſciences have been invented, or when they have been introduced into a country: when they have flouriſhed and enjoyed the higheſt point of perfection, and when they began to decay, until they precipitated themſelves into barbarity.

It now only remains to ſpeak directly of the rules of the compoſition of the figures. The rules to be obſerved in each figure, are principally the contraſt and contrapoſition of the members, the expreſſion, convenience, quality, and age of the perſons.

Contraſt, or be it contrapoſition of the members, ſignifies that if one would wiſh to advance an arm, one ought to retract the leg from the ſame ſide, and alſo the other arm ought to be drawn back, and the leg of that ſide ought to be advanced. The two arms ought not to be equally advanced, becauſe one

cannot draw back the two legs at once without making the figure fall. The head ought to incline to that ſide where the arm is raiſed, and to turn to that part where the hand is moſt advanced.

No member ſhould form a rectangle; nor ſhould ever two members have the ſame parrallel between them. One hand ought never entirely to meet with the other, and no extremity ought to be in a line perpendicular and horizontal with the other; nor ſhould one find a foot and two hands, the feet and one hand to form a direct line: this would be a great error.

A group is an union of figures, which ought all to tie one with another. They ought to be compoſed of an unequal number, as of 3, 5, 7, &c. Of all equal numbers thoſe which are compoſed of two unequal are the moſt admiſſible; but one can never uſe doubled pairs with grace. Thoſe of the firſt order are, for example, 6, 10, 14, &c. the others 4, 8, 12, &c. Each group ſhould form a pyramid, and at the ſame time it ſhould be of a rotund form as much as is poſſible in its relief. The greateſt maſs ought to be in the middle of the group, endeavouring always to place the little parts at the edges in order that the group may become more light and pleaſing. It is alſo neceſſary to ſeek to give profundity proportioned to the field of the group; that is, not to place the figures in a file, in order that it might produce a pleaſing air, from the variety of the greatneſs of the forms,

and from the play and accidents of the clare obſcure, which one always meets on like caſes. One ought equally to obſerve, as I have ſaid above, that there be never many extremes in a direct line, either horizontal, perpendicular, or oblique; that no head be horizontal or perpendicular with another; that no extremities, ſuch as heads, hands, feet, &c. can form a regular figure, ſo well as tirangular, ſquare, pentagonal, &c.; that two members have never an equal diſtance between them, nor that there be two members, two legs, or two arms of the ſame figure in equal foreſhortening; finally, that no member be repeated; and if one ſhows any exterior part by the right-hand, it is neceſſary to diſcover the inward part by the left-hand, and to endeavour always to ſhow the moſt beautiful parts, which are generally ſpeaking, all the joints, ſuch as the neck, ſhoulders, elbows, pulſe, hip, knees, tibia, ſpinal and breaſt. The ſe parts are beautiful, for two different reaſons; becauſe, in the extremities one might ſhow much expreſſion and ſcience; and the others, ſuch as the back and breaſt of a man, are the moſt grand, and beautiful to unite in a group agreat maſs of the ſame pleaſing colour, as is the fleſh colour; and to give a grateful repoſe to the ſight either in the clare or obſcure. In women, all naked parts are pleaſing to be ſeen, as well before as behind, excepting thoſe parts which decency requires to be hidden. It is notwithſtanding neceſſary to be known, that hiding ſome parts with artifice augments their beauty

and grace; becauſe, it is certain that a breaſt not entirely diſcovered appears much better than that which is fully in view, and the ſame happens in the other parts, which, hidden, have more grace than if entirely ſeen: from whence he who diſcovers nakedneſs more than decency, exites in ſpectators only laſciviouſneſs, without gaining eſteem; becauſe the art does not depend upon theſe things. The reaſon why a naked women in a painting pleaſe more than men, are two: The firſt, is that their complexions are more agreeable, and the clare obſcure appears more rotund, and of courſe the maſſes are more graceful; and for this reaſon it will always appear better in a beautiful youth than in a robuſt man. The ſecond reaſon is, becauſe it is more eaſy to ſee women naked in a painting than in nature; for which reaſon they appear more ideal than the bodies of men which we are at liberty to ſee when we pleaſe. There is alſo a third reaſon which every one may imagine.

If it be neceſſary to put more groups united, one obſerves the ſame rule which I have given for a group of an unequal number of figures; that is, to conſider to place an unequal number of groups; in caſe, however, that this number of groups or pyramids had not place on account of the painting not being ſufficiently large, one might make an intire group, and two halves at the other ſides, taking care to obſerve the laws preſcribed in the profundity and number of figures. The principal figure ought al-

ways to be in the middle of the group; and if many are equally principals one ought to ſeek to place the whole near the centre; and always in the ſecond ſtage, and never in the firſt, in order that one might ſee them ſurrounded by the other objects, and raiſe them by means of clare obſcure and perſpective. It is alſo neceſſary that the compoſition in general forms always a ſemicircle, be it convave or convex, becauſe both the principal and moſt brilliant one can place in a commodious ſtyle in the centre.

One ought likewiſe generally to have regard to the variety; that is, to ſhow the moſt beautiful parts of the ſubject in general, and of the figures, however without adopting the defect of ſhowing always certain parts, and hiding others. Variety is a thing very eſſential, and to follow it, one ought to have care to ſhow all the moſt beautiful parts of the ſubject, and of each figure in particular, but without falling into the oppoſite error. When one can, one ought to place in a compoſition perſons of both ſexes, and of every age, which will produce a pleaſing variety in the expreſſion and action; and one ſhould likewiſe ſee that they have ſymmetry and equilibrium between one part of the painting and the other, but without loading weight upon weight, or weight againſt weight in an horizontal or perpendicular line.

VIII.

Of Grace.

It is almoſt impoſſible to define Grace; and for that reaſon I ſhall ſpeak of it only in deſcribing the effects which it produces in the arts. It is certain, that it does not conſiſt in colours, forms, or in clare obſcure, taking each of theſe things ſeparately; although it is in all theſe things united together, in a manner, that if one fails there is no longer Grace. Many confound grace with beauty, which is only a part that reſides in the forms, as we know there can be beautiful forms without grace. Others, with equal equivocation, place it in harmony, which has only connection with colours, and is the laſt part, becauſe it requires clare obſcure to render it viſible. Nor does grace conſiſt in clare obſcure, becauſe the function of that is to ſhow the waving or the relief of things. Notwithſtanding, we know that without theſe three things, one cannot obtain grace in painting, and much leſs without variety; and for that reaſon we ſee, that however beautiful a thing may be, if it be without variety, it cannot have grace; from whence beauty is a quality ſubordinate to grace.

Grace, therefore, according to my opinion, is of two kinds; one natural and ſimple, and the other compoſed. That of the firſt kind one might find in all things, and goes with

beauty; the other reſults from the union of various things, which have the firſt grace in themſelves, and form with ſaid union a third thing, which is neither beauty or harmony, and which enchants, by reducing all the reſt to acceſſory parts.

I ſhall not ſay more of its eſſence, and proceed to explain how a painter might acquire it. All things which we can paint have form, colour, and of courſe clare obſcure, or light and ſhade; to repreſent them therefore gracefully, it is neceſſary to give to each of theſe parts much variety, and in this manner they will acquire grace; obſerving, however, not to give an equal variety to each of theſe parts, becauſe it would then ceaſe to be true variety, and would be deficient in the true fundament of grace.

This one might prove by ſketching a ſimple outline, or letter, becauſe, varying it in force and delicacy, it will have a grace which is not in its form, as one might ſee by writing letters in a beautiful hand, but of lines of equal force and thickneſs. Of courſe grace principally conſiſts in variety.

This variety renders alſo new things pleaſing, which after one is accuſtomed to them, do not delight ſo much, loſing the merit of variety; and for that reaſon, old people are leſs ſenſible of the pleaſure of novelty, becauſe having ſeen ſo much, they no longer, or very rarely, find variety.

To give, therefore, this grace to painting, and to pleaſe our ſenſes by its means, it is neceſſary to preſent variety to the eye; becauſe in this manner it will give to the ſpectator the pleaſure of novelty, making him forget one thing to learn another; and taking from him the diſguſt produced by continuation, and making him obſerve the moſt remarkable things in variety itſelf, as we ſee happens in a bunch of flowers, in which a roſe, for example, is diſtinguiſhed among many other little flowers, which, for an inſtant, make one forget the greater ones, and the eye paſſes from one to another object, always enjoying the novelty, by the variety of the different things which each has in its natural grace.

IX.

Of Grace in Contour.

The Grace of Contour conſiſts in that which we call Elegance, and which is eaſe united to the variety of the forms. One might find elegance alſo where there is not correctneſs, becauſe the firſt belongs to beauty, and the ſecond to grace.

To explain this, I will adduce examples of three famous painters, Correggio, Carravaggio, and Rubens, who are in equal degree diſtant from rigorous beauty, or at leaſt from correctneſs; but with regard to grace and elegance, they differ infinitely. Carravaggio had neither variety or correctneſs; and for that reaſon his

deſign is worth nothing. Rubens was deſtitute of beauty and every correctneſs, but had more variety than Carravaggio, and for that reaſon he is more tolerable. Correggio, in ſpite of ſome little incorrectneſs, poſſeſſed ſuch variety, elegance, and grace, as to do away that defect; and with theſe advantages he has produced a particular taſte in deſign, which would be the moſt noble and moſt beautiful, if he were not inclined a little to uniformity; and this was the part which the Carracci's moſt adopted.

It is neceſſary, therefore, in deſign, to ſeparate elegance from grace, becauſe grace conſiſts in the union of elegance with variety; and if one of theſe two things be wanting, there can be no grace. Elegance conſiſts in avoiding all extremes in the forms, and in a certain equilibrium in the concave and convex contours. Rubens uſed too much the convex lines, which rendered his forms heavy and ordinary. Correggio, to the contrary, united the concave and convex contours with ſuch proportion, that he attained the higheſt excellence and lightneſs. Carracci in imitating him, knew not how to maintain that equilibrium, and inclined too much to the convex.

All theſe obſervations one might make upon the ancient ſtatues, and without going out of the Pharneſian palace, conſidering the different taſte which there is between the famous Glicon Hercules, and the other which is by his ſide, and between the original parts of the firſt, and thoſe which have been modernly reſtored. One

might make the ſame obſervations in the Flora of the ſame palace, and the Commodus, which wants every elegance. The Hercules, which is of the ſublime taſte, in ſpite of his ſize and force, appears very light when viewed at a diſtance, and the other ſtatues, although not ſo large and thick, appear heavy and ordinary. Theſe ſame reflections one might repeat in ſeeing the other ſtatues of the firſt order, as the Apollo, the Laocoon, &c. and here one might know the difference between the Grecian taſte, and that which is called Roman, in which is always found a kind of harſhneſs, and want of elegance.

If Domenichino had poſſeſſed that part, he would have been moſt excellent; but the privation of elegance is a great injury to him. Raphael would have been elegant in the higheſt degree, if he had maintained a little more rotundity; that is, if in ſome parts he had not lengthened too much the ſtraight lines: he was, however, famous in the proportion of the variety of the lines, and without that imperfection he would have been equal to the ancients of the firſt rank. From the ſame cauſe it ariſes, that he was leſs happy in the figures, and leſs delicate in his women and children; and to the contrary, he was admirable in the nervous nature of his old people, philoſophers, apoſtles, &c. but when he wiſhed to be graceful, he fell into rotundity and planes. Michael Angelo ought not to be cited in this article of elegance, becauſe he did not know it; and

ſince thoſe who pretend to imitate him, are in that more defective than him, it is uſeleſs to mention them. One has to remark, as a general rule, that without variety one cannot produce elegance; and although any one may wave well, if he does not equilibriate his waving, in the reſt of the forms he will never attain that intent; and this was the capital defect of Rubens. In ſhort, any form repeated too many times deſtroys elegance; and to the contrary, one ſhall attain it by changing the forms before they are perfectly finiſhed; becauſe if they were finiſhed, they could certainly make variety, but not elegance. So that, in wiſhing to make a round form, for example, before compleating the half circle, it will be neceſſary to twiſt a little the curve, and to terminate it by making an obtuſe angle. In nature, which the painter avails of, nothing is perfectly round or ſquare, and all is a continued alternative of figures.

The other circumſtance which correſponds to the contours, regards compoſition, which I ſhall explain in that article.

X.

Of Grace in Clare Obſcure.

Grace having ſtability in elegant variety, we ſhall ſee how it ought to enter in clare obſcure. Even in clare obſcure, it has been ſaid to be from the maſſes of light and ſhade being of different force and grandeur. Making them in

this manner, they will be able to produce variety, and of courſe grace. I ſhall give ſome detail of this ſubject.

One ſhould always have care to chooſe a principal light, and to place it in that ſituation which one would wiſh to be moſt conſpicuous and brilliant, and to have care that all the painting has not a ſimilar light of equal force, and obſerving the ſame in ſhade, one ſhall attain much of grace in all the work.

This done, one might diſtribute the half tints in different degrees, in a manner that they might ſerve to make the two aforeſaid greateſt extremes reſplendent, and one ſhould be attentive not to let one's ſelf be puzzled by a certain falſe brilliant clare obſcurewhich has deceived many painters; becauſe by much relief and force in things, that is, making violent contraſts, and joining two extremes, ſuch as the greateſt clare and the greateſt obſcure, one deſtroys all grace, and the effect of the half tint, and that which is more, the grace of the ſame colouring; becauſe, as I have ſaid, the two extremes, white and black, are not true, and to give grace to a painting, it is neceſſary that all the things which are in a painting be more or leſs viſible, in order that it might have a perfect variety, in which conſiſts grace; and this is not to be obtained without a great attention to the gradations of the clares and obſcures.

One has alſo to obſerve the value of the colours, as has been ſaid in the article of colour-

ing, becauſe all clares being more pleaſing than obſcures, one ought not to deſtroy the grace of a countenance, or of a clear drapery, by oppoſing it to a ſtrong obſcure with the view of giving it greater force, as ſo many painters generally do, and as Guercino did. It is therefore neceſſary in every thing to preſerve its character and proper value, and even to give to the clear fleſh a correſpondent ſhade; and for a ground, things alſo more gradated; preſerving thus, union with variety, becauſe it would be ridiculous to make a white coat with the ſhades all black, that colour not being able to change its nature, or to alter its natural clare or obſcure.

The firſt reaſon why clear things pleaſe, comes from Nature itſelf. Clare reſembles light, of which we avail much: from whence painters, who are gloomy in their works, are alſo ſo in their ideas and characters, becauſe all that is in their nature.

It is therefore neceſſary to give to paintings all the cheerfulneſs one can; and if neceſſity obliges one to repreſent ſome melancholy ſubject with an open air, one ought to make the light come much from the ſide, in order that it might produce much ſhade.

In ſhort, without expreſſion one cannot have propriety; without propriety, not beauty; and without beauty one cannot give grace; from whence if one deſigns a woman like a man, however beautiful it may be, it will not have propriety, nor beauty ſuitable to the object, nor grace.

XI.

Of Grace in Compoſition.

I have many times ſaid that in all parts variety forms Grace; now I ſhall explain how one may attain that variety in Compoſition. It is neceſſary firſt to conſider, that variety ought to go conjunctively with other things which I have ſaid to be neceſſary for good Compoſition, and by obſerving which, no impediment will be found to variety, becauſe our art is very liberal, and one might profit from all things. All the errors of many painters who know not how to unite reaſon with taſte, ariſe from their applying themſelves more to acceſſary parts than to principals. To avoid this they ſhould have care to diſpoſe of the principal figure always firſt, and to give it all the nobleneſs and propriety which its character deſerves. From thence they ſhould proceed to diſpoſe of the principal figures of each group, and each figure in particular, ſeeking not to make any inferior thing, if ſomething of more conſequence remains to be done. By this method they will enable their genius to conceive all the parts with diſtinction, and to know more eaſily if they have fallen in any error or repetition. This done, let them examine all the work, to ſee if they have obſerved all the rules eſtabliſhed in compoſition, and certainly they will find compriſed there propriety and neceſſary variety, becauſe all things depend one upon the other.

In all paintings one has to endeavour as much as poſſible, to introduce every age, ſex and eſtate, and the different impreſſions which external things can produce: in this manner one ſhall attain propriety, and with that variety, beauty, and finally grace. If to this be added, giving to each figure the dreſſes which correſpond to heir eſtate, ſex, and age, with obſerving the rules of clare obſcure, deſign, &c. there will be in the painting a wonderful variety of particular beauties, whoſe union will comprehend the moſt beautiful ſpectacle, and moſt perfect grace. With regard to propriety, I have to ſay, that if it occurs to be able to paint any object which in itſelf has not grace, it is neceſſary to procure it by making beautiful and moſt conſpicuous the parts which are moſt neceſſary. For example, nothing is more ugly among human figures than ſatyrs, fawns centaurs, and tritons, and to them may nevertheleſs be given beauty and grace, by ſtudying the propriety of their nature. In the human parts of the centaurs one can ſhew the ſtrength of a horſe, uniting the bones more ſtrongly than in a man: in the ſatyrs, one ſhould make known the avidity of its goaty nature: in a triton the legerity and ſubtilty of ſkin, and its viſcidity, and the muſcles, without the appearance of that hot ſubſtance which comes from the blood, and in ſanguinary animals ſwells the veins and fleſh. The ſame ought to be underſtood in all other things, in which by obſerving propriety one ſhall attain the union of variety; from whence ariſes grace.

XII.

Of the Proportions of the Human Body.

Infinite are the deſcriptions of the proportions of the human body, but ſcarce any two accord. Thoſe which I have read are not very clear, nor do I believe they can give to painters a juſt idea of the ſubject. Beſides that, ſome authors have limitted too much the combinations that could produce an uniform proportion in the figures. Others, and among whom is Albert Durer, have explained a great number and variety of proportions; but they ſerve for nothing, except to thoſe who would wiſh to imitate his taſte. I ſhall therefore alſo ſay ſomething on this ſubject, which might ſerve for all taſtes, founding it upon nature and art.

It is a general maxim to divide a figure in a determinate number of heads or faces; but this method will be good for ſculptors only, and not for painters, who never ſee the heads juſt, becauſe the perſpective hides at leaſt one third of the fourth ſuperior part; and the width of the members cannot be meaſured with ſuch exactneſs as they are meaſured by ſculptors, becauſe they would appear meagre and ſtraight upon the plain ſurface, in oppoſition to what it appears by the perſpective; becauſe as we ſee all things with two eyes, we ſee the contours of things greater than the juſt diameter; and this happens in nature as well as in ſtatues, but not in painting. The ancients alſo ob-

ſerved that, and therefore we ſee, that their bas-reliefs are thicker than their ſtatues; to be underſtood, the beautiful bas-reliefs, comparing them with the contemporary ſtatues.

Painters have occaſion to uſe variety infinitely more than ſculptors, and of courſe have leſs ſubjections. Raphael, in a certain ſenſe only multiplied the taſte of the ancients of the ſecond order, by uniting it with a certain truth of which ſculpture has not availed, either from rule or from taſte, of all ſorts of proportions, without being able to decide if one were better than an other; and I know ſome of his figures, which have little more than ſix heads and an half; a proportion which would not be ſufferable in any other one Raphael.

The ſtructure of the human body has ſuch a ſymmetry, that it gives the idea of its motion, and this concordance of members is ſuch, that to be able to produce that effect, one has to obſerve, what is called correctneſs of deſign. I ſhall therefore proceed to treat of this ſuccinctively, propoſing that which one ought to do to obtain it.

The figure which one would wiſh to make being determined, one may deſign the head of the ſize one likes, obſerving, notwithſtanding, for a rule, that the ſmalleſt head a painting admits of, is the ninth part of the figure, and the largeſt is a ſixth part; theſe two dimenſions are the two extremes; the general ſize being of an eighth or a ſeventh part of the figure. The neck ſhould then be made equal to half of the head. . . .

NOTE of the EDITOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING I have ſtudied with indeſcribable pains to extract from the ſketches of Mengs, the rules which he would wiſh to give upon the proportions of the human body, I have found it impoſſible to compoſe from his fragments any thing which can give ſatisfaction, and ſerve for rules in a matter ſo important and delicate; from whence I have thought it proper to ſuppreſs the remainder of that chapter, in order not to expoſe myſelf by propoſing errors for rules.

Whoever would wiſh to know the proportions of the head only, may have recourſe to Winkelman, where he explains the ſyſtem of Mengs, in his firſt edition of the *Hiſtory of the Arts*. But I believe, that not even Winkelman comprehended well that matter, and his French tranſlator compleatly disfigured it; ſo that in the laſt edition of that book, this article is almoſt ſuppreſſed. As for that of the Italian tranſlation, recently publiſhed at Milan, it appears to me it has compleatly finiſhed to confuſe and obſcure the poor author.

It is in the power alone of ſome learned artiſt of fine taſte, and who has ſtudied the works of Mengs; but this is not to be hoped, except from a youth well educated in the right rudiments of the art, and not from thoſe already profeſſors, who hold nothing for good, expect what their own blind practice had imbibed in their early years, and know not how

to leave off in old age, nor can ſuffer that their contemporary, Mengs, ſhould riſe above them, and become their maſter.

Thoſe either do not look at his works, or elſe they look at them with pre-occupation, and lacerate them without having ſeen them. This is a fact; and in Rome happens frequent proofs of it. It happened a little time ſince, that whilſt in a company of artiſts, and of *dilettanti* of every kind, they obſerved and praiſed two portraits of a young Venetian, a coxcomical painter, not Roman, but of a country which has never produced painters or ſculptors, even of the middling kind (although it buys ſculptures and paintings at a high price), hearing that this eſteemed youth was copying the portrait of Pope Rezzonico, done by Mengs, ſaid, *(petulanti ſplene cachino)*; that his pencil would loſe inſtead of gaining by that ſtudy. He, however, was ignorant that the aforeſaid youth, during the time he had been at Rome, had ſtudied only the paintings of Mengs, and particularly that of the Cabinet of the *Papiri*; which have been laterly engraven. Harpies could not have done worſe. It has happened to theſe paintings, as well as to thoſe of the rooms of the Vatican, that they ſtill continue to engrave them; by which Mengs ſaid, that they tranſlated Raphael into Venetian. The ſale of them is great, notwithſtanding, and will be ſo as long as amateurs are intelligent men.

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